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SHAH, RACHEL,CAROLINE,HUGHES

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# Abstract

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Though reports of schooling's failure to meet the needs of indigenous people are consistently prevalent in Papua Province, Indonesia, little is known of indigenous perspectives on the dilemma of how to effectively use schooling to benefit Papuans without harming them. I use data from eighteen months of participant observation, a time allocation study and a shadow method in Eragayam Tengah, a rural Walak-speaking region of the Papuan highlands, to investigate the nature of education outside of schooling, analyse what effect schooling has on this education, and compare a Walak understanding of the purpose of schooling with that of other stakeholders.

I found that education in the private Ob Anggen school and education outside of school are not mutually exclusive and argue, controversially, that as an education already exists which prepares children well for rural Walak life, indigenising schooling is unnecessary. Indeed, schooling is valued by many indigenous Papuans precisely as a means of accessing what rural life does not yet offer; Walak people hope to use schooling to move themselves from the margins of global society towards the centre, where power, status and material resources appear abundant.

Walak perspectives on schooling ostensibly align with mission and international development agendas but though Walak people hope schooled individuals will gain foreign knowledge, they fully expect them to retain Walak values, such as egalitarianism, autonomy and reciprocity. As my analyses of time and work demonstrate, these values, and the concepts they employ, contrast starkly with those held by other stakeholders, which results in competing and incompatible visions of schooling success.

This thesis explains some of the reasons why state schooling appears to be failing in Papua Province and provides important insights into indigenous perspectives on the purpose of schooling, without which neither understanding nor improvement of Papuan highlanders' educational prospects can be built.

# An Ethnographic Analysis of the Use of Schooling as an International Development Tool in Eragayam Tengah, Papua



**Rachel Shah**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Anthropology, Durham University

**2016**



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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

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ACDP	Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership
AusAID	Australian Aid
BPS	<i>Badan Pusat Statistik</i> , Central Bureau of Statistics
GIDI	<i>Gereja Injili di Indonesia</i> , Evangelical Church of Indonesia
GPS	Global Positioning System
IPA	<i>Ilmu pengetahuan alam</i> , Natural sciences
IPS	<i>Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial</i> , Social sciences
PKN	<i>Pendidikan dan Kewarganegaraan</i> , Citizenship Studies
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNS	<i>Pegawai Negeri Sipil</i> , civil servant
Rp.	<i>Rupiah</i> , the Indonesian currency, see note on exchange rate on page xi
SBM	School Based Management
SD	<i>Sekolah Dasar</i> , Primary School
SERASI	<i>Serasi</i> means harmony in Indonesian. For an unknown reason the SERASI project title is always capitalised even though it is not an acronym
SMA	<i>Sekolah Menengah Atas</i> , Senior Secondary Schooling
SMP	<i>Sekolah Menengah Pertama</i> , Junior Secondary Schooling
STKIP KW	<i>Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen Wamena</i> , Christian Teacher Training Institute, Wamena
TA	Time Allocation
TK	<i>Taman Kanak Kanak</i> , kindergarten
UN	United Nations
UNCEN	<i>Universitas Cenderawasih</i> , Cenderawasih University
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIPA	<i>Universitas Papua</i> , University of Papua
UNTEA	United Nations Temporary Executive Authority
USAID	United States Aid
YAPIS	<i>Yayasan Pendidikan Islam</i> , Muslim Education Foundation

YASUMAT	<i>Yayasan Sosial Untuk Masyarakat Terpencil</i> , Social Foundation for Remote Communities
YKW	<i>Yayasah Pendidikan Wamena</i> , Wamena Education Foundation
YPA	<i>Yayasan Pendidikan Advent</i> , Advent Education Foundation
YPK	<i>Yayasah Pendidikan Kristen</i> , Christian Education Foundation
YPPGI	<i>Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Gereja-Gereja Injil</i> , Evangelical Education Foundation
YPPK	<i>Yayasan Pengembangan Pendidikan Katolik</i> , Catholic Development and Education Foundation

# Statement of Copyright

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The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## Notes to the Reader

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### Sources

Myself or my husband, S. A. Shah, are the source for all photographs used in this thesis unless otherwise noted.

Some material from this thesis has been previously published in:

Shah, R. (2015) 'Questions of power in schooling for indigenous Papuans', in Sillitoe, P. (ed.), *Indigenous Studies and Engaged Anthropology: The Collaborative Moment*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Limited, pp. 235-255.

Shah, R. (2016) 'Learning, Labour and Leisure', in Skinner, A., Baillie Smith, M., Brown, E. and Troll, T. (eds.), *Education, Learning and the Transformation of Development*, Oxford: Routledge, pp. 36-49.

### A Note About the Exchange Rate

The currency used in Eragayam Tengah is the Indonesian Rupiah (IDR). When I have given a pound sterling (GBP) equivalent for IDR in this thesis I have used the rate of 15,000 IDR to 1 GBP. During my fieldwork the exchange rate fluctuated around this rate, though it is now different.

### Pseudonyms

I have used pseudonyms throughout this thesis (see Chapter Three), except for Benjamin Wisley (known as Scotty) who has agreed to being identified by name.

# A Note on Orthography

---

The Walak language is rarely written. I have largely followed Indonesian orthography in transcribing it, with the following exceptions:

'dl' represents a voiced retroflex lateral flap (except in "Togodli" where it represents a 'dl' sound as in the English "fiddle" - Walak people told me to write the retroflex lateral flap as 'dl' which is why I have done so even though the 'dl' sound in "Togodli" also exists)

'gh' represents a voiced velar approximant<sup>1</sup>

'v' represents a voiced labio-dental fricative (as in English)

Note that in Indonesian and Walak, unlike in English, 'r' is a rolled r and 'd,' 't,' 'p' and 'b' are usually unaspirated.

With names that are commonly written, I have followed the most usual spelling rather than trying to transcribe the sounds.

There are inaccuracies in my transcriptions due to my difficulties as a non-native speaker and a non-linguist in correctly identifying certain phonemes.

---

<sup>1</sup> This may be a voiced velar fricative - a very similar sound - but I think it is a voiced velar approximant.

# Thank You

---

There is no part of writing a Ph.D. thesis which is easy, but I have sometimes thought that writing the acknowledgements may be the most intimidating part of all. As all who have been on a similar journey know, a few short paragraphs hardly suffice as acknowledgement of the hundreds of people who have been part of making this Ph.D. a reality. To the named and unnamed, thank you.

Thank you to my Walak friends and to my friends in Ob Anggen. This research reflects our relationships and shared experiences and I am incredibly grateful for the courage, grace, warmth and dignity you showed in having me live and learn with you. "*Wa wa wa wa wa wa wa.*" Thank you for this research, and, even more so, for this relationship.

An enormous thank you to my supervisors, Paul Sillitoe and Andrew Russell, for their excellent supervision. Paul Sillitoe met with me before I had even begun, and has been a consistent support and inspiration ever since. Thank you to both he and Jackie, for welcoming Aaron and me into their home and for encouraging us at every turn.

Scotty Wisley's help, support, and insight was so extensive that it would take pages to outline. Scotty, it takes real courage to invite an anthropologist to do research on the thing you are pouring your life into. You have been a true partner in this research.

The man who I have called Oreb Gombo in this thesis played an important role in helping me clear up misunderstandings and figure out how to do research ethically in an environment where not everyone understands what research is. Thank you to him, and to the other men, women and children in Eragayam Tengah who knew me best and hence bore the brunt of my curiosity, confusion and mistakes during fieldwork.

I am so grateful to the Walak women who first made me feel I had friends and not just neighbours in Eragayam Tengah. These women patiently explained things to me, filling in many of the gaps I had noticed from previous conversations. They kept me having fun, exploring, playing in rivers, laughing and chatting. Nogari, I loved fieldwork, but without your friendship, I would not have done. It was your teary faces, blurred by my own tears, that were my last image of Eragayam Tengah - for now.

The Ob Anggen team welcomed my husband Aaron and me with open hearts from the day they met us. It was they who invited us to live with them for the first three months, who taught us how to light a fire with wet wood, who included us in their prayer meetings, retreats and fun nights, and who encouraged me when they found me crying with frustration in the early weeks. Both Aaron and I are so thankful for their friendship. Della, Kelina, Heidi, Dewi - thank you for challenging me, encouraging me, trusting me, loving me, laughing with me, covering for me and praying for me. You kept me connected, in so many important ways. I can't wait to see you again.

The Ob Anggen team also provided Aaron and me with practical support, often before we realised we needed it. This included helping us to order supplies, communicate with visa sponsors, order flights, arrange transportation, use the school's electricity (and later, internet) and much more. Frequently this support was unasked for, unpaid for and unexpected, such as the time some Ob Anggen team members installed solar panels on our house while we were away, the time Alinus spent his Saturday siphoning

water from the river to our house so we could have running water, the time Robert gave up several days of his Christmas holiday to help us find a way out of the highlands when our flight was cancelled, and the time Scotty asked staff members to build us a toilet in our home. A thousand thank yous.

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# Dedication

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To my friends in Eragayam Tengah and in Ob Anggen

and to Aaron, always.

Wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa  
wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa  
wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa.

Nogari, wa.

# Chapter One: Introduction

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## Schooling: A Universal Good?

For decades there has been consensus among politicians, development practitioners, leaders of transnational organisations and other representatives of the development sector that education is an important target for development work (Mundy and Manion, 2015, Unterhalter, 2015). A right to education is enshrined in most national constitutions and in multiple international treaties, including The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948, Article 26) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989, Articles 28 and 29). Education has become an internationally ratified target of development through the Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All targets and the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2016a, c, d). In each of these international treaties and agreements, despite an occasional passing acknowledgement that important learning happens outside of school, education is equated with schooling (McCowan, 2010) and schooling is assumed to be "a universal genderless *good*; so good, indeed, as to be declared a basic human *need*; so needed as to be claimed a universal human *right*" (Prakash and Esteva, 1998, 1, emphasis in original).

As well as being a target in its own right, governments and international development organisations also promote education as a means of driving other goals of development (McCowan and Unterhalter, 2015, UNESCO, 2014). The United Nations, for example, claims that schooling is "essential for the exercise of all other human rights" (United Nations, 2016b), that it "beats poverty," "promotes gender equality," "reduces child mortality," "contributes to improved maternal health," "helps combat...preventable diseases," "encourages environmental sustainability" and, most generically, "helps global development" (United Nations, 2016a). Schooling is often presented in development documents as a necessary prerequisite to a productive adult working life (see for example, World Bank, 2015, 14, which claims that "The biggest challenge to an equal start for all is the quality of education"). The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is quoted as saying "Education is a



fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country" (UNESCO, 2014). Although these claims may sound inflated, the idea that education is a solution for numerous social problems is ubiquitous. Consequently, the belief that lack of access to schooling is a social injustice is also widespread.

Despite its prevalence, the "education for all" agenda - universally understood to actually be a "schooling for all" agenda - is a relatively recent historical phenomena. The roots of the belief that all children should go to school and the "implicit trust in the power of education to achieve desired ends" in Europe and North America go back to the sixteenth century (Cubberley, 1920a, Strauss, 1976, 71) but it was not until the nineteenth and early twentieth century that missionaries and colonial powers, themselves convinced of schooling's efficacy and merit, began to use schools as tools of change among the indigenous peoples they encountered (Mundy and Manion, 2015). Schooling became institutionalised as a tool of the state in many colonised regions and it remained after formal colonial rule ended. This laid the foundation for the incorporation of goals related to schooling into international development, which emerged as a field of research and practice after the Second World War. Since the year 2000, these goals have explicitly included the provision of free and compulsory primary education for all children globally (United Nations, 2016a).

## **Schooling and Indigenous Peoples**

The idea that children's learning should happen primarily through schooling is not universal. Scholars and activists have convincingly demonstrated that equating schooling with education is both ethnocentric and ill-informed, given that innumerable alternative models of education exist (Dei, 2015, Reagan, 2010). They have amassed extensive evidence of the ethnocidal, oppressive and homogenising agendas behind many instances of schooling's use among indigenous peoples and have shown that colonial and neo-colonial powers have used schooling in a way which has contributed to the destruction of indigenous forms of education as well as to indigenous cultures, languages and identities (Aikman, 1999, Bishop, 2003, May, 1999b). They have also shown how schooling has infringed on other rights (McCowan, 2010) and has often failed to result in the positive outcomes promised, leaving schooled individuals with a sense of being personally or culturally inadequate (Maclean, 2004, McCowan, 2010,

Nichol, 2015). The suffering indigenous peoples have experienced as a consequence is well-documented, as is the fact that indigenous children enrolled in schooling continue to experience less success on multiple measures of schooling outcomes than their non-indigenous counterparts (Bishop, 2003, May, 1999b, May and Aikman, 2003, Nichol, 2011, 2015, Sillitoe, 2011).

The Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education (1999, 56) was written to specifically address the educational marginalisation which indigenous people have experienced through schooling, which it characterises in the following terms:

Historically, Indigenous people have insisted upon the right of access to education. Invariably the nature, and consequently the outcome, of this education has been constructed through and measured by non-Indigenous standards, values, and philosophies. Ultimately the purpose of this education has been to assimilate Indigenous people into non-Indigenous cultures and societies.

Volumes of studies, research and reports dealing with Indigenous peoples in non-Indigenous educational systems paint a familiar picture of failure and despair. When measured in non-Indigenous terms, the educational outcomes of Indigenous peoples are still far below that of non-Indigenous peoples. This fact exists not because Indigenous peoples are less intelligent, but because educational theories and practices are developed and controlled by non-Indigenous peoples. Thus, in more recent times, due to the involvement of Indigenous peoples, research shows that failure is indeed present, but that this failure is that of the system, not of Indigenous peoples.

In this context the so-called "dropout rates and failures" of Indigenous peoples within non-Indigenous educational systems must be viewed for what they really are - rejection rates.

The Coolangatta Statement makes clear that most indigenous people want equitable access to schooling, despite the fact that it has been a site of marginalisation, oppression and suffering for many of them. This tension is, according to May and Aikman (2003), central to research on indigenous education. It is the case both in nations in which indigenous people are now minority populations as a result of settler colonialism and in self-governing nations in which indigenous people are the majority. Even though (or perhaps, as May and Aikman suggest, because) schools have contributed to many indigenous peoples' loss of self-determination, indigenous rights

movements reclaim schools as important tools in the struggle *for* self-determination. This is partly because schools have become so widely accepted as institutions in which knowledge is taught, learned and produced, that one way to legitimise and validate indigenous knowledge and to ensure the perpetuation of indigenous languages is to incorporate them into schooling (Aikman, 1999). In many contexts, schooling has also become a means of validating people as competent and intelligent. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills (such as, for example, literacy, numeracy and the scientific method) that children typically learn through schooling are powerful and effective in their own right (Bernard, 2011, Dei, 2015), and these kinds of knowledge have also become so dominant on a global scale that it is impossible to effectively self-govern, negotiate contracts and trade agreements, and advocate for indigenous rights without them. As Nichol (2011, 34) points out, "it could be argued that if self-management and self-determination are to be realistic goals for Indigenous communities then the leaders will need to be able to communicate, liaise and negotiate with outsiders and these skills require academic education." However, the struggle for equitable access to schooling and the use of schooling as a tool for indigenous self-determination runs the risk of validating schooling's dominance and cementing perceptions of schooling as the only, best or most natural way of educating children, thereby further de-legitimising indigenous forms of education. Schooling's global dominance presents a dilemma: should schooling be made more equitable so that people are not marginalised within it or should activists work towards greater recognition of alternative systems of education so that people are not marginalised without it?

The Coolangatta Statement and other international instruments like it, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) and the Indigenous Peoples Earth Charter (Kari-Oca Conference, 1992) assert that both are important. However, most indigenous people recognise that unless they can access schooling and translate their experience of it into positive outcomes, they will only be further marginalised. Unterhalter and Brighouse (2010) categorise the benefits of education in three overlapping spheres - intrinsic, instrumental and positional. The intrinsic benefits of education are learning, thinking, reasoning and otherwise participating in education for its own sake, regardless of the

outcomes it leads to. The instrumental benefits of education are those that result from the skills and knowledge learned which enable students to better participate in society. The positional benefits of schooling are those a person gets as a result of the social status associated with being schooled, or with having achieved particular certificates or titles. Though the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of education can be achieved without recourse to schooling, the positional benefits rarely can (McCowan, 2010, Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2010). In fact, the global importance of scholarly knowledge is such that indigenous people can only access some of the instrumental benefits of education through schooling too. Thus, although the ideal of protecting and respecting alternative, indigenous forms of education remains strong in indigenous rights movements, the emphasis in research and practice has largely been on making schools more equitable.

## **The Problem in Papua**

These issues are very pertinent in the rural highlands of Papua,<sup>2</sup> Indonesia, where synonymising schooling and education makes little sense. Schooling, which was introduced to Papua in the nineteenth century by missionaries, is different from any of the indigenous forms of education in the region and at first Papuans were largely unconvinced of its benefits (see Chapter Four). However, despite their experiences of over a century of schooling informed by foreign agendas, including the use of schooling to 'civilise,' assimilate, homogenise or 'empower' the indigenous population, most Papuans now want access to schooling for their children and are willing to go to considerable lengths to get it (Farhadian, 2005, Munro, 2009, 2013, Shah, 2015, 2016, Stasch, 2015). Currently, though, much of children's learning in rural areas happens outside of schools and many of the schools in Papua Province rarely open, or operate in ways, as McCowan (2010, 513) puts it in his summary of global schooling problems, that "fail to provide an experience that can meaningfully be called education."

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<sup>2</sup> The western half of the island of New Guinea has been governed by Indonesia since 1969 (see Chapter Two) and it has been repeatedly divided and renamed. Currently, the region known most commonly in international circles as "West Papua" comprises of two provinces which are called Papua Province and West Papua Province. I did my research in the highlands of Papua Province. When I use the term 'Papua' in this thesis, I am referring to both provinces. This usage is typical in Papua itself.

International development practitioners and funders, the Indonesian government, the provincial governments, and missionaries working in the region agree with the many indigenous Papuans who argue that improving access to and the quality of schooling in the region is an urgent priority, particularly for rural communities. Consequently, extensive funds from Papua Province and West Papua Province's own resources as well as from foreign aid have been invested in this shared goal (Government of the Republic of Indonesia and United Nations, 2010, Mollet, 2007, UNDP, 2005, UNICEF Indonesia, 2009, World Bank, 2015). The priority of ensuring access to quality schooling for Papuans is also supported by the Special Autonomy Law of 2001 which countered the centralisation policies of President Suharto's New Order Regime and made the Papuan Provincial Government responsible for education at all levels in the province,<sup>3</sup> explicitly stipulating the provincial government's right and responsibility to "protect, foster and develop the culture" of indigenous Papuans (Special Autonomy, 2001). Papuans now hold positions as teachers, head teachers and civil servants who are in charge of schooling at local and provincial levels. However, state schooling in Papua Province is universally reported to be failing, despite a relatively high degree of indigenous control over it, plentiful financial investment, the influence and experience of foreign organisations such as UNICEF, and a consensus between all stakeholders on the importance of schooling (see Chapter Four, see also Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, Munro, 2009, 2013, Shah, 2015, USAID, 2009). Is this the case, and if so, why is this? This thesis addresses these questions, and the related one of how schooling can be used to benefit Papuans without harming them.

## **The Anthropological Study of Learning**

I chose to approach my research questions anthropologically because I value the discipline's commitment to study phenomena holistically within their social, economic, political and historical contexts. An understanding of the contexts in which schools are situated in Papua is crucial to understanding why, how and for whom schooling is succeeding and failing. There is also a long tradition in anthropology of research into education which is not limited to a focus on schooling. Four streams of

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<sup>3</sup> At the time Papua was one province.

anthropological research into how children learn and are taught in different contexts globally are particularly relevant to my research. These are studies of socialisation, educational anthropology, ethnographies that focus on education outside of school (though not necessarily framed as socialisation), and indigenous knowledge research.

### **Socialisation and Enculturation Studies**

The reproduction of culture (enculturation) or society (socialisation)<sup>4</sup> was a topic of great interest to the early anthropologists in America, including Frank Boas, Ruth Benedict, Melville Herskovits and Margaret Mead. Their ethnographies served to falsify claims in psychology about the universal nature of child development (LeVine, 2007) and formed the foundations of anthropological research into how children learn outside of school.

Several prominent examples of these studies were done in Oceania, the most well-known of which is Margaret Mead's (1931) *Growing up in New Guinea*. Mead studied child rearing in Manus and argued that some of the characteristics of children at particular ages assumed to be universal by American psychologists are in fact a product of how children are brought up. Mead concluded that imitation is a more powerful force than any educational method and that the adult world in which children grow up more or less defines the limits of what they will learn. She gives little account of children's role in creating knowledge and shaping norms as well as learning them (Sillitoe, 1998b). In fact, she describes socialisation as the “way in which each human infant is transformed into the finished adult” in Manus (Mead, 1931, 1). Nonetheless, Mead's work was influential in making child rearing the topic of ethnography and in using the term 'education' to cover far more than schooling (Langness, 1975).

Whiting (1941) also made child rearing in Papua New Guinea the subject of his ethnography, which he developed into a theory of socialisation some time after his fieldwork. He describes children's socialisation as motivated by the satisfaction of drives, including basic drives such as hunger, thirst, sex and pain and acquired drives such as fear, anger and the desire for prestige, and argues that because Kwoma

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<sup>4</sup> Some anthropologists (including Mead, 1963) distinguish between these terms but in this thesis I use them as synonyms.

children's responses and rewards to such drives are determined by members of Kwoma society, children do not just learn to satisfy their own drives in the way most convenient or preferable but instead learn "the habits which are specified in the culture as being best" (Whiting, 1941, 177). Whiting and Whiting (1975) and the rest of their team in the Six Cultures Study also contributed to the anthropological study of children's learning by questioning assumptions of both the universality and the cultural uniqueness of children's development that were being made by psychologists and anthropologists respectively at the time. They established that culture is an important variable in any analysis of children's behaviour and in this their conclusions converge with Mead's and with Whiting's earlier work.

### **Educational Anthropology**

Early ethnographers such as Mead and Whiting treated enculturation as a smooth process in which norms were imprinted on the child (Yon, 2003), but this understanding of education did not explain the individual agency and creativity which anthropologists such as Raum (1938) and Morton (1996) record, nor did it account for cultural change (Shimahara, 1970). A growing interest in innovation, conflict and hegemony in cultural transmission came to the fore with Marxist and feminist influences on anthropological theory and with it came countless critiques of the concept of culture, which had come to be used in a way that implied bounded,<sup>5</sup> coherent groups that had an essential distinctness from other groups, and was reminiscent of the biological reductionism that Boas had originally used the term "culture" to avoid (Abu-Lughod, 1991, Eisenhart, 2001, Fox, 1995, Gonzalez, 2004, Stolcke, 1995, Yengoyan, 1986). Disillusionment with the concept of culture lead to a diminishing interest in the study of enculturation.

As interest in studies of socialisation declined, interest in studies of schooling grew. In 1950, George Spindler became one of the first anthropologists to use the ethnographic method in an American elementary school classroom (Finnan, 2013). Spindler (2000, xxiii-xxiv) confesses that the director of his research team "did not know exactly what an anthropologist should do in a study of schooling," and that at

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<sup>5</sup> By "bounded" I mean discrete entities with discoverable boundaries which define them.

first he himself felt that "there was nothing to see, nothing to take notes on" in the classroom. This sentiment lasted until the day that he noticed that the classroom appeared to be set up to favour the success of higher-status white-skinned children. This initial study marked the beginning of George Spindler and his wife Louise Spindler's extensive anthropological work on schooling (for example Spindler, 1963, 1965, 1974, 1982, 1987) and their contribution to forming educational anthropology as a field (Eddy, 1985).

Gradually a shift of focus in anthropological studies of learning from ethnographies of socialisation to ethnographies of schools occurred. Educational anthropology began to analyse schools as sites in which societies' inequalities are replicated and contested and to critique them for causing the educational failure of minority groups (Yon, 2003). The field of educational anthropology became oriented towards producing research that had a direct application to schooling policies (Eddy, 1985, McCarty, 2005, Yon, 2003) with a goal of addressing social injustices within schools (Finnan, 2013, Spindler, 2000). This applied anthropological approach divided the field from mainstream academic anthropology. Despite the fact that interest in educational anthropology was partly motivated by an increasing interest in power and agency and by disillusionment with the culture concept in mainstream anthropology, culture-dependent concepts such as "multiculturalism" and "acculturation" continue to be used in most of the research produced within educational anthropology (Gonzalez, 2004, Yon, 2003). Singleton (1999, 456-457), in his review of the field of anthropology and education condemns this tendency, calling it a "vulgarized anthropology." He also condemns the frequent conflation of education with schooling.

### **Anthropological Studies of Education Outside of Schools**

Smith (2005, 93) articulates a difference between the study of "education *in other cultures*," which focuses on understanding "worldviews, cultural patterns of socialization, and development in non-Western cultures and societies," and the study of "other cultures *in education*," which focuses on the successes and failures of various cultural groups within school systems. It was the former approach that Mead and Whiting took, but it is the latter focus on schooling that dominates educational anthropology (Singleton, 1999, Varenne, 2007).



Research into indigenous knowledge and indigenous education has widened the focus of educational anthropology and to some extent brought these two emphases together. However, even this research focuses largely on schooling, perhaps because it is seeking to address the urgent global problem of how schooling can be made more just for indigenous children. Nichol's (2011) work, for example, explores the irrelevance of the formal education being offered to indigenous Aboriginals in Australia and argues for alternatives that draw on indigenous pedagogies, integrating traditional knowledge systems with Western practice. He investigates the relationships between school and Aboriginal life outside of school in Murrin Bridge, race relations, the problems with creating an 'elite,' the dangers of over-localisation, and the difficulties indigenous Australians face if they wish to regain power and dignity without participating in a system that does not recognise their identities, let alone their aspirations. Other examples of research that uses ethnographic methods to situate schools within their cultural and historical contexts and to explore indigenous ideologies which could inform schooling reform include the articles in the Special Issue of *Peabody Journal of Education* edited by Lipka and Stairs (1994) and the contributions in the book *Indigenous Education*, edited by May (2003).

Robinson-Pant's work (2000) also uses ethnographic methods to study how indigenous perspectives compare and relate to foreign development perspectives on education through her focus on non-formal adult literacy projects for Nepalese women. She claims that "micro-ethnographic approaches to research can have relevance for literacy policy on a macro-level" (Robinson-Pant, 2000, 154). Ethnographic studies of indigenous education<sup>6</sup> *per se* are rarer. Examples include Sarangapani's (2003) work on indigenous medicinal knowledge among the Baiga, Mosha's (2000) study of the Chagga educational system, Murphy's (2012) study of learner-initiated knowledge transmission among the Kayapó, and Manuelito's (2005) study of what it means to be an educated person in Ramah Navajo epistemology. Though some of these anthropologists consider the implications of indigenous forms of education for schooling, their focus is on education outside of schools.

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<sup>6</sup> For the sake of brevity and clarity, I use the term "indigenous education" or, in the context of my research, "Walak education" to refer to education outside of schooling.

Schieffelin's (2007) work on the language socialisation of Kaluli children represents a return to the study of socialisation in Papua New Guinea, but from a different perspective than that used by Mead. Schieffelin (2007, 239) studies the specific linguistic interactions Kaluli people have with young children in which, as she puts it, "cultural meanings are displayed to young children and reproduced by them." She argues that the study of language socialisation has implications for studies of socialisation more generally, because it constitutes both the study of how children learn to use language in valued ways and how children learn other valued behaviours through the use of language. The three themes which emerge from her study - autonomy versus interdependence, authority (in the context of egalitarianism), and gender and reciprocity - also emerged as important themes in my research. In the case of autonomy and interdependence, the Kaluli themselves recognise these themes as values which are potentially problematic in relation to each other. Although Schieffelin (2007, 245) refers to these themes, or values, as structuring society, her analysis shows that language socialisation occurs as a series of interpersonal negotiations, sometimes between multiple persons, in which children are active participants and in which "there is a tension between predictability and ambiguity." Her arguments depart from the early socialisation studies which were critiqued for over-emphasising structural constraints on children's agency.

### **Theorising Learning and 'Education'**

Schieffelin is not the only anthropologist who has addressed the theoretical question of how knowledge reproduction over generations relates to children's agency. Toren (for example 1993, 1999b, 2003, 2007), who has undertaken extensive ethnographic work with Fijian children, theorises that humans are autopoietic, by which she means that each human is always engaged in a process of making meaning but that meaning is shaped by his or her intersubjective relations, history and conditions of existence. Toren does not use the culture concept at all. Instead, she focuses on individuals as the loci of their own social relations. Her articulation of similarity and difference is dynamic and unbounded but nonetheless acknowledges that the knowledge (or, as she would call it, meaning) produced by people living in similar conditions of existence with similar intersubjective relationships is more similar

to each other's knowledge or meaning than it is to that of people living in different environments with different histories and relationships. Another way she puts it is that humans both produce and are produced by history (Toren, 1999b). As with Bourdieu's *habitus*, which is also a concept of constraint on individual agency (Nash, 1999), Toren argues that structure and process are implicit in each other and therefore inseparable: children are "at once the subjects and objects of history" (Toren, 1993, 474). Toren's work is helpful for the way it differentiates similarities and differences in specific terms that are otherwise often conflated under the term 'culture.' This is analytically useful; it draws attention to the fact that the 'cultural differences' encountered by indigenous children who go to school are constituted by specific changes to their experiences. These include their experiences of the physical and social conditions of the school environment as well as the relationships they have with teachers, other schoolchildren and other unschooled children, and the indirect relationships they have with funders, the state, the people who produce school materials and the people such as myself who study schooling.

Lave (for example 1991, 1993, 1996) also argues that learning is neither independent from the social world nor completely constrained by it. It should not, she argues, be analysed as something that occurs in the mind, but rather be studied as "situated social practice" (Lave, 1991, 81). Her emphasis is on how learning transforms identity, not by changing the characteristics of a person, but by changing their relationships to "communities of practice" in which "mastery is an organizational, relational characteristic" (Lave, 1991, 64). Through this process, learners transform knowledge and knowledge also transforms learners. Meanings, knowledge and skill are generated relationally and are therefore always open-ended to an extent, but, are, nonetheless, constrained by the very social relationships of the communities of practice in which learning occurs.

Varenne (2007), moves deliberately away from theorising learning, as he argues that learning is too narrow a term for his purposes, and instead attempts to build a theory of education. He argues vehemently that the conflation of the word education with schooling is nonsensical. At best, schooling is one means of enacting the processes of education (see also Barrón Pastor, 2015, Singleton, 1999). Varenne

defines education broadly and points out its ubiquity. He agrees with Lave that education is inherently social, and, like both Toren and Lave, he analyses education as an unceasing, ever changing process in which "human beings make themselves, and then remake themselves," and in which they influence each other (Varenne, 2007, 1562). He, however, puts less emphasis on constraints. For Varenne, Bourdieu's *habitus* is too strong a constraint for a theory of education, as it does not accommodate the way people improvise, even in the face of terms enforced on them by people who have more power than they do. He disagrees with those who argue that social orders are reproduced through shared understandings (which are internal) and instead uses Garfinkel's (2002) work to argue that social orders are maintained and reproduced through social, instructional interactions and negotiations (Varenne, 2007, 1575).

Varenne quotes Lawrence Cremin (1976, 567) who defines education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, and any learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended." However, Varenne takes Cremin's definition further, explicitly collapsing the dichotomy between intentional and incidental education. He argues that education is not so much *deliberate*, if deliberate is understood to mean intentional, as it is *deliberative*, in that it is the joint activity of people talking about, responding to and reflecting on things that have happened. These deliberations, which are often difficult and require effort, happen in response to ignorance, to the unpredictable, and to ambiguity about how what is known should be applied to emerging situations.

I have found Varenne's theory of education useful for its articulation of education without reference to bounded cultures, mindsets, worldviews, norms, *habitus*, values, or any other concepts that people or groups of people internalise, which can be misunderstood as essential characteristics by which people can be categorised. Much of my research is about the moments of instruction, negotiation or knowledge seeking which constitute the observable social processes of education according to Varenne's definition. Furthermore, the dichotomy between intentional and incidental education does not hold up in my observations of indigenous education,

which the breadth of Varenne's definition accommodates. However, there is a danger that Varenne's definition is so broad that it is not so much a category of social behaviour as it is a way of framing *any* social behaviour. Furthermore, it potentially excludes the intentional attempt to acquire or share knowledge, which must surely be considered part of education even though it is not the sum total of it.

Varenne's theory of education also helps little in analysing similarities and differences in educational practices. He (2007, 1580) argues that the only thing specifiable for such an analysis is where people place themselves in relation to knowledge and ignorance, and that when people specify what they do not know in the face of difference this is not an instance "of brewing intercultural trouble, but rather the reverse: [they] are confronting a pragmatic difficulty, developing a metapragmatic discourse, and powerfully educating themselves in the most liberal sense," though he does acknowledge that "whether this will make them successful in the terms to which they will be held accountable is something else altogether." The problem is that this "something else altogether" is an important aspect of education; I do not think Varenne goes far enough in acknowledging the potential "trouble" that differences - particularly in the terms by which people are held accountable - can create.

An example from my fieldwork shows the limitations of Varenne's definition. Several months into fieldwork, I was walking along a path with a friend when we passed a mutual friend who offered me some tubers. At the time I was overwhelmed by the number of tubers I already had at home, and also by the obligation to reciprocate I felt every time I was given food, so as an experiment, I tried refusing the tubers. The woman offering them to me accepted my refusal but no sooner had we passed her than the friend I was with pulled me aside and fiercely whispered to me that I was wrong to refuse the tubers and that I should not do so again. I agree with Varenne that this moment of instruction, which, notably, did not depend upon a shared understanding between my friend and I, was an instance of education. However, had I gone home and read about exchange between women in ethnographies of Papuan highlanders, or been instructed by my supervisor about how to respond in the future, or attended training by a missionary about Papuan highlanders' cultures, or decided to rely on an understanding of gift giving I had

learned through social interactions in the UK, each of these would also have been a form of education, and each of them would have differed in their purpose, the extent to which they were social, the means by which the process of education was enacted, the content that I learned and my success with regards to the terms by which I was held accountable. I do not think Varenne's definition sufficiently accounts for such multiple and differing educational processes, which are the subject of this research.

Therefore, although I support Varenne's rejection of any essential, internal characteristic which determines people's actions (and which education might inculcate), Toren's analysis of agency which is influenced by relationships, histories and environments better explains the similarities and differences I analyse than Varenne's explanation of difference does. In my research, I do use terms which allow me to articulate such differences even though they could be misunderstood to imply bounded *units* of difference. For example, values, like culture, should not be understood to be essential, deterministic, internal characteristics by which people can be categorised into bounded groups. Nonetheless, differences between values exist and values can clash. Similarly, we humans are ourselves ever-changing, multiple and fragmented in our identities, and our perspectives can be complex and sometimes contradictory. Nonetheless, the fluidity of people's identities does not mean there is no such thing as an experience of difference between people, nor that it is impossible for such differences to result in misunderstanding. It is critical to remember that whilst the articulation of difference can be useful for trying to solve particular problems in particular contexts, difference is never essential, stable, bounded or categorical. Furthermore, the articulation of difference is primarily useful as a means of highlighting similarity, which it does by sweeping away inaccurate perceptions of even greater differences between people or populations than really exist.

### **Indigenous Knowledge Research**

Although a plethora of definitions have been offered for what indigenous knowledge is (for example Grenier, 1998, Howes and Chambers, 1979, Thrupp, 1989, Warren, 1996b), there is a consensus on the broad semantic thrust of the term (Ellen and Harris, 1997, Sillitoe, 1998c, Sillitoe, *et al.*, 2005, Sillitoe and Marzano, 2009). Indigenous knowledge is knowledge that is local, transmitted orally or through

experience, demonstration or imitation, to most individuals of a particular socio-cultural context, and which is usually relevant to everyday life. It is situated in context, dynamic, shared, fragmented in its distribution and usually (but not always) empirical rather than theoretical (Ellen and Harris, 1997, Sillitoe, *et al.*, 2005).

In the last three decades, research into indigenous knowledge has gone from being a common, albeit somewhat marginal, interest in the academic disciplines of ethnoscience, human ecology and anthropology to being a prominent concept considered useful to development research and practice (Agrawal, 1995, 2009, Davis and Ebbe, 1993, Sillitoe, 1998a, Thrupp, 1989, Warren, 1996b). This increased recognition was linked to a shift in mainstream development theory from top-down modernisation (see "Liberal Capitalism" below), in which indigenous knowledge had been seen as "pre-logical" or "irrational" (Howes and Chambers, 1979, 5), to a more participatory approach that recognised the legitimacy and value of indigenous knowledge, and that also linked the concept to themes of political and social justice for indigenous people (Davis and Ebbe, 1993, Sillitoe, 1998a).

As a concept, indigenous knowledge has proved to be less useful to academia and development than many proponents of the concept hoped it would be (Sillitoe, 2010b). The concept relies on a false dichotomy between indigenous knowledge and scientific or "Western" knowledge and also implies a homogeneity within these categories that is indefensible (Agrawal, 1995, 2009, Sillitoe and Marzano, 2009). Given the defining characteristics of indigenous knowledge, it makes little sense to decontextualise and systematise it in order to make it useful to development (Agrawal, 1995, Sillitoe, 1998a). The concept is also loaded with political implications: there is no clear way of measuring what Ellen and Harris (1997, 2) call "indigenouness." It is a term people use to describe themselves or their knowledge in order to make a political point (Ellen and Harris, 1997, Sillitoe, 1998a).

Some researchers (for example Brouwer, 1998, Heyd, 1996, Serrano, 1996, Warren, 1996a) have responded to such critiques by arguing that despite the inherent difficulties with the concept of indigenous knowledge, something of value – however ill-defined – remains. Köhler-Rollefson (1996) argued that the difference is not between 'Western' and 'other' knowledge but between practical and book knowledge,

both of which can be found in many cultures. Semali (1996) pointed out that the concept of indigenous knowledge has been useful to stimulate discussion about what a successful education is. Warren (1996a) argued that the important thing is valuing the contribution of every community to global knowledge. Others (see Bishop, 1999, Gegeo, 2001, Nakata, 1998, Nichol, 2011, Porsanger, 1994) have used the concept of indigenous knowledge to counter the political violence done to indigenous people through schools and through research. As these debates and comments show, whilst indigenous knowledge may be a difficult category to defend, the concept has been valuable because it has led to an increased recognition and legitimisation of differences in what and how humans know and learn (Sillitoe, 1998c). Although these are not essential or categorical differences, they are worthy of research.

In my attention to such differences, I build on the heritage of indigenous knowledge research. However, I personally found the term too broad and imprecise to use analytically. I therefore only use it to refer collectively to the skills, values, beliefs and other forms of knowledge that children learn outside of school as a contrast to the equally broad and imprecise term "school knowledge."

## **Perspectives on International Development and Education**

The study of learning has not been limited to the discipline of anthropology. A number of theoretical perspectives on the relationship schooling has with development have emerged in the field of international development since the Second World War. These perspectives have surfaced in response to ongoing development practice and evaluation and to changing ideological trends in the social sciences. McCowan (2015) outlines five of the most commonly-held perspectives on how education and development relate, each of which inform contrasting understandings of why schooling so frequently fails indigenous peoples. In order to situate my approach within wider international development and education theory, I give a brief overview of these five perspectives, and distinguish two further perspectives - participatory approaches and indigenous rights approaches - which I consider distinctive from the five McCowan outlines.



## **Theoretical Understandings of Schools as Tools of Development**

### ***Liberal Capitalism***

Liberal capitalism, which is the perspective on which the international development project was founded, assumes that the primary purpose of development is economic growth, and that this aim is best achieved through capitalism. Schools are important to liberal capitalists because they create productive workers who in turn contribute to the national economy. Variants of liberal capitalism include human capital theory, which emphasises schools' role in preparing workers for nation-building, and modernisation theory, which emphasises schools' role in transforming individuals' attitudes to those presumed to be necessary for a "modern" nation. Liberal capitalist economists have even tried to calculate the exact rates of economic and social returns that investment in schooling offers and have encouraged policy decisions made on the basis of such calculations (see Dore, 1976 for a critique of such calculations). Although development practices informed by liberal capitalism have frequently failed to bring about real improvements to the lives of people living in poverty (Dore, 1976, McCowan, 2015), liberal capitalist approaches to development still exist and have even experienced a revival in some quarters recently (for example, liberal capitalist thinking is implicit in much of the literature published by the World Bank).

### ***Marxist-Informed Theories***

Marxist-informed development theories oppose capitalist ideology and argue that development extends capitalism's influence and thereby perpetuates rather than diminishes poverty. Marxist development theorists are concerned with systems of power and highlight the ways that schools reproduce structural social inequalities (Keyes, 1991). Dependency theory, which is a prominent example of a Marxist-informed approach, asserts that development can only occur if colonised nations break their dependency on former colonial powers and chart their own educational courses (McCowan, 2015). This perspective is evident in Nyerere's (1967) policy booklet on education and schooling in Tanzania, which critiques liberal capitalist approaches, describes schooling as one of many diverse forms of education and argues for a

schooling which is more relevant to Tanzanian needs as part of a new, Tanzanian approach to development.

### ***Liberal Egalitarianism***

Liberal egalitarian theorists, by contrast with Marxist ones, accept capitalist modes of production as long as they are constrained by international commitments to what they consider to be universal moral principles, such as equality of opportunity, protection of individual agency and human rights. The rights framework, in which schooling is valuable both as an inherent human right and as a means of empowering individuals to defend their other rights is an example of a liberal egalitarian approach. Similar examples are found in capabilities frameworks, such as those developed by Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000).

The most prominent and widely accepted perspectives on education within international development currently are liberal egalitarian ones. For example, the United Nations relies on a rights framework across its agencies' work in promoting education. Liberal egalitarian values are evident throughout the Sustainable Development Goals, which promote "inclusive" and "equitable" education, and specify that that education should be "quality" (United Nations, 2016c, Goal 4). Education should also involve increasing the number of people with "relevant skills...for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship" (United Nations, 2016c, Goal 4.4). There are echoes of human capital theory in the value for schooling which results in employment. However, within liberal capitalism the purpose of schooling is economic growth, modernisation, civilisation and nation-building, whereas liberal egalitarianism promotes schooling as a means of empowering individuals in their choices, capabilities and opportunities. Within the constraints of liberal egalitarianism's absolute values, diversity is also valued more than it is within liberal capitalism. One of the targets of learning, according to Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 is "appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (United Nations, 2016c, Goal 4.7).

For the rest of this thesis I refer to what McCowan calls "liberal egalitarian" as "liberal democratic" to avoid confusion with Melanesian egalitarianism.

### ***Radical Humanists***

Radical humanism promotes a narrower vision of development than that of liberal democratic perspectives. Schooling, according to radical humanists such as Freire (1970), is a means to develop critical consciousness which will in turn, he argues, lead to political emancipation and social transformation. For radical humanists emancipatory education *is* development.

### ***Participatory Approaches to Development***

McCowan (2015) categorises the participatory turn in development along with approaches such as Freire's, but I consider it to be a distinct approach to international development. Those who promote participatory approaches to development do not necessarily equate development with emancipatory education and do accept that the development programmes liberal capitalists and liberal democrats introduce can be beneficial. However, they argue that the recipients of development ought to have at least as much power over problem-identifying and decision-making processes as development professionals do, and they generally attempt to take indigenous knowledge into account. This is more of a development methodology than theory.

### ***Postcolonialism and Post-Development Theories***

Postcolonial theory highlights the violence that happened when schooling and other experiences of colonialism taught colonised people to see themselves through colonisers' eyes. Post-development theory applies similar critiques to development. Post-development theorists such as Ferguson (1990) and Escobar (1988, 438) assert that development imposes ideas which have come to be seen in industrial societies as "normal and transparent ways of behaving and acting" on contexts in which those ideas make no sense and have disastrous consequences. They demonstrate that "development discourse has evolved from colonial discourse" and highlight the ethnocentric nature of its foundational assumptions (Ziai, 2007, 8). Schooling, according to post-development theorists, is a manifestation of this ethnocentric imposition. It undervalues alternative ways of learning and destroys cultural diversity. Some post-development theorists assert that "school and education can be related but are not necessarily so, and it is a huge mistake to misperceive having school training as

being educated" (Barrón Pastor, 2015, 73). Others, including influential theorists such as Prakash and Esteva (1998) and Illich (1971), argue that not only is schooling not synonymous with education, it is actually corrupting education, in both economically poor countries and in supposedly 'developed' countries. To them, the fact that primary schooling is often compulsory is a violation of fundamental freedoms. Ultimately they reject both development and schooling as worthy endeavours (Karlberg and Correa, 2016, 23). A recent application of this perspective can be found in Norberg-Hodge's (2016) claim that the introduction of schooling to Ladakh in India has been detrimental to people's well-being, contributed to the destruction of a previous idyllic way of life and has not even succeeded in preparing them for jobs in a capitalist economy.

Post-development theory has been critiqued for its essentialising discourses which fail to recognise diversity within development practice and which group cultures together on the basis of a capitalist/non-capitalist dichotomy as if these were homogenous categories. It has also been criticised for romanticising non-industrialised societies and for failing to provide concrete and plausible alternatives to development which address global inequalities that cause real suffering for people living in poverty (see Karlberg and Correa, 2016, McCowan, 2015, Ziai, 2007 for summaries of some of the critiques frequently made). Ziai (2007) responds to these criticisms by pointing out that however valid they may be, post-development theory has contributed at least two crucially important critiques of development which are hard to dispute. The first is that development is a Eurocentric concept which has evolved from colonialism. The second is that development has hierarchical implications: 'development' can only occur when people in positions of power prescribe what they understand to be positive social change for people in positions of less power. As Ziai (2007, 9) says, "knowledge about 'development' is in this sense knowledge about the deficiencies of others' way of life, about the necessity of its transformation, about the appropriate method, and about the legitimacy of all that." Although their emphases and proposed solutions to development's frequent failures are different, radical humanists and advocates for participatory approaches to development also make these two critiques of development central to their analyses.

### ***Indigenous Rights Approaches***

Indigenous scholars and activists who have critiqued schooling also share post-development theorists' concerns about the ethnocentric nature of schooling and development and the unequal power relations inherent in them, but they differ in an important way: rather than rejecting the tools of development, they use them. Thus, instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are used to establish and extend indigenous peoples' rights, first and foremost to be indigenous, and secondly to access "systems of education which reflect, respect and embrace Indigenous cultural values, philosophies and ideologies..." (World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, 1999, 57). Rather than rejecting schooling altogether, indigenous rights activists demand the right to control schooling and to establish learning institutions in which indigenous values, philosophies and ideologies are embedded (Kari-Oca Conference, 1992, United Nations, 2007). This may seem like a compromise to post-development theorists, but indigenous people are understandably unwilling to contribute to their further marginalisation by keeping their children out of schooling altogether. Many are also, as Dei (2015, 181) puts it, "mindful of the possibilities of Western scientific knowledge, albeit critical of its tendency to appropriate other knowledges and all the while not giving credit to, and masquerading, its understandings as universal."

### **Interpretations of Schooling's Failures Among Indigenous Peoples**

Scholars approach analyses of how and why schooling has often failed as a tool of international development differently, according to the theoretical camp or camps they are influenced by. Most analysts would agree that schooling transforms pupils, whether by filling their brains with knowledge, shaping their mental abilities or changing their social attitudes (Dore, 1976, 94). However, they disagree on how it should do this transformational work as well as on why its results are not always positive.

One theory of failure that is criticised by indigenous scholars is the cultural deficit theory (Bishop, 2003, Dei, 2015). There are a number of takes on this theory, but what they all have in common is that, as Bishop (2003, 223) puts it, they "see the

locus of the problem as either lack of inherent ability, lack of cultural appropriateness or limited resources; in short, some deficiency [of indigenous peoples] at best, a 'pathology' at worst." Those who subscribe to some version of cultural deficit theory, subscribe to either liberal capitalist or liberal democratic understandings of the relationship between schooling and development. Convinced by schooling's efficacy, they look to the cultures, abilities or resources of students for explanations of schooling's failure to achieve positive outcomes.

An alternative explanation is that "it is the patterns of dominance and subordination and their related classroom interaction patterns" that prevents schooling from delivering the benefits it purports to offer to indigenous children (Bishop, 2003, 222). This perspective can be argued from a Marxist, radical humanist, post-development or indigenous rights stance. According to this perspective, schools themselves create patterns of failure among indigenous children. In recent years, such analyses have most commonly focused on the numerous arenas in which schooling fails to recognise, reflect or incorporate children's indigenous knowledge, cultures and identities in its practices. For example, schooling is criticised for teaching knowledge which is irrelevant to students' future livelihoods (Maclean, 2004, Nyerere, 1967), for relying too heavily on some epistemologies to the exclusion of others (Quanchi, 2004, Shah, 2015), for using pedagogies which exclude indigenous children (Nichol, 2011, 2015, Sriprakash, 2012), for legitimising and assessing knowledge in ways that diminish indigenous epistemological traditions and intimidate indigenous pupils (Bishop, 1998b, Nichol, 2015, Sillitoe, 2010b) and for not representing indigenous people in their curriculum materials or among their staff (Kaomea, 2005, Shah, 2015, Thaman, 2001).

Sometimes, superficial attempts to rectify these practices are also criticised for doing more harm than good. For example, Kaomea's (2005) classroom ethnography on representations of Native Hawaiians in Hawaiian schools led her to conclude that it is risky to have non-indigenous people teaching indigenous peoples' histories because of the potentially disastrous colonial-like distortions that can occur. Maori students have also experienced their own histories being taught to them according to the representations of foreign researchers who became known as 'experts' about Maori people (Bishop, 1998b, Te Awakotuku, 1991). As a number of scholars have argued,

attempts to make schooling more relevant to indigenous people need to go beyond tokenistic attempts to incorporate indigenous histories and knowledges into the existing model of education; they need to consider whose values underpin education (May, 1999a, Thaman, 2001) and which metaphors and images inform the processes of teaching and learning (Bishop, 2003, Bishop and Glynn, 1999).

May (1999a) has also argued that incorporating cultural and linguistic differences into schooling is insufficient if schools do not also address the power relations that these cultural differences are situated within and of which they form a part. Indigenous knowledge is not just *different* from school knowledge; it has also been *subjugated* by it. Thus the power imbalances indigenous children experience in school and in their lives outside of school frequently prevent them from accessing the benefits of schooling even when they are able to access schooling itself (Bishop, 2003, May, 1999a). An analysis of how issues of power affect schooling in the five areas of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimisation and accountability has been undertaken by Bishop and Glynn with reference to Maori schooling (Bishop, 2003, Bishop and Glynn, 1999) and in my own work with reference to Papuan schooling (Shah, 2015).

A variety of solutions informed by these perspectives have been proposed, each of which holds the importance of ensuring indigenous people have equitable access to schools in tension with the need to value alternative ways of knowing, teaching and learning (Quanchi, 2004). Whether the argument made is for indigenised schooling (Ajala, 1996), indigenous community-based education (May, 1999b), intercultural education (Aikman, 1999), bi-education (Shah, 2015) or critical multiculturalism (May, 1999a), these solutions aim to give children a strong foundation in their own language and culture as well as ensure they learn the non-indigenous knowledge they need to participate in wider society and may want to use to pursue their own aspirations (Aikman, 1999). Indigenous scholars sometimes use metaphors and images rooted in indigenous cultures, such as the *Tree of Opportunity* (Thaman, 2001, 6) or *whānau* (broadly, a concept which refers to the Maori extended family, see Bishop, 1998, 217 and Bishop, 2003, 227) to express the particular kinds of schooling reform they advocate.

The attempts that have been made to apply the principles of these proposed solutions in practice have met with some success, but also serve to underline how complicated it can be to bring together two or more different ideologies in one education system (Bishop, 2003, Lipka and Stairs, 1994, May, 1999b, May and Aikman, 2003). One of the complexities is that historical power dynamics are such that dialogue between indigenous knowledge and academy knowledge has to be on non-indigenous terms in order to be legitimised in international scholarly communities (Sillitoe, 2015), yet the translation of indigenous knowledge into non-indigenous terms can be inherently corruptive of that knowledge (Dei, 2015). Moreover, enrolment in schooling - bicultural or otherwise - changes the amount of time children spend participating in educational processes outside of school. A handful of studies (such as Ohmagari and Berkes, 1997) have shown that this can have a detrimental effect on indigenous knowledge transmission. Several researchers have also warned that schools must be careful not to fall into the trap of essentialising cultures or treating them as if they were static (Harris, 1994, Henze and Davis, 1999, May, 1999a). As May (1999a, 33) writes, "the recognition of our cultural and historical situatedness should not set the limits of ethnicity and culture, nor act to undermine the legitimacy of other, equally valid forms of identity."

Though some researchers, such as Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) and May (1999a), present differences between indigenous knowledge and school knowledge as a richness which both traditions can benefit from, others see the differences between them as incompatible. For example, post-Enlightenment thought tends to create a firm divide between spirituality and knowledge of the environment (Keyes, 1991) but in many indigenous knowledges, spiritual knowledge and other forms of knowledge are inextricably linked (Dei, 2015, Mosha, 2000, Reagan, 2010). Harris (1994, 142) asserts that the differences between what he calls "the Aboriginal world view" and "the Western industrial world view" in Australia are so fundamental, and the Western world view is so dominant, that bicultural schools need to have separate domains for Aboriginal content and Western content, with the Aboriginal content representing a safe haven for Aboriginal ways of being, doing, teaching and learning. Sarangapani (2003) explores the interest in indigenising school curriculums in the context of the



Baiga people in India. The *ashram shalas* (formal schools) which Baiga attend present knowledge in literary forms, out of context, and expect children to be competitive and to perform analytical and abstract tasks. Their indigenous medicinal knowledge, called *vidya*, must never be written down, is secretive, transmitted orally, non-systematised and integrated with Baiga ways of bringing up children. Sarangapani concludes that the pedagogical and epistemological differences between these forms of education are incommensurable and argues that the survival of *vidya* will be best achieved by keeping it out of formal education. As these examples show, though the need to make schooling more equitable for indigenous people remains high on the indigenous rights agenda, scholars continue to highlight how problematic participation in the academy is (Dei, 2015).

### **My Theoretical Perspective**

I set out to do this research to resolve a dilemma - how could the injustices of poverty and suffering be addressed without colonial superiority, cultural homogenisation or patronising agendas being woven into alleged solutions? Experiences in my childhood and early adulthood had left me sympathetic to the development goals of alleviating human suffering and addressing social injustices, but my undergraduate degree had exposed me to enough anthropological research that I knew development projects could also perpetuate social injustice and unintentionally do more harm than good. Education was often touted as a solution, but it was clear to me that schools are caught in the same paradox that development as a whole is. It was a personal dilemma, because the answer would inform what kind of work I was willing to do, but the more I read about it and reflected on it, the more I realised that it was a global dilemma too. Indeed, over the last decade the questions I address in this research have become increasingly prominent, as demonstrated, for example, by the £20 million programme of research into how to achieve better learning outcomes in developing countries which the UK's Department for International Development are currently funding in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council. In Papua, practitioners have been investing in improving schooling for decades, but little research had been done which could inform answers to the questions I was asking.

In keeping with the principles of ethnographic determinism (see Chapter Three and Sillitoe, 2010a) I did not undertake this research having predetermined the theoretical perspective from which I would carry out my investigations. Rather, I have drawn on the work of scholars from several different theoretical perspectives, testing their assertions against each other and, more importantly, against the data I gathered in the field. Nonetheless, my research, like all research, is shaped by the values, beliefs and experiences of the researcher. I agree with post-development theorists and indigenous rights scholars who argue that schooling is only one form of education and that other forms of education offer valuable insights, perspectives and knowledge. I also agree with those who assert that indigenous perspectives on schooling are important and under-represented. Consequently, I have designed this research in a way that does not position indigenous education as peripheral to schooling. The work of indigenous rights scholars has influenced my work by making me attentive to and interested in both the differences between various forms of education and the power dynamics that affect how those differences inform children's experiences.

I also agree that development was born out of colonialism, and caused many of the problems it seeks to solve, but I sympathise with the pragmatism of those indigenous rights scholars and liberal democrats who argue that, in practice, lack of access to schooling disadvantages people. Indeed, it was this very paradox that motivated my research in the first place. Nonetheless, I do not use the language of liberal democratic perspectives - such as that of "rights" - without problematising its universalist assumptions. Likewise, although I have referred to indigenous peoples in this chapter as if 'indigenous' were an unproblematic category, I actually reject the implied dichotomy between "indigenous" and "non-indigenous." Identity characteristics are multiple, fluid and overlapping (May, 1999a, Toren, 1999a).

It is also important to note that although I take the work of critical theorists and indigenous scholars seriously and agree with many of their political points, unlike many of them, my goal in this research is not to support or discredit particular political positions; it is to promote understanding. I firmly believe that research can and should make contributions to social justice, but I also think that predetermined judgements of "right" and "wrong" positions can easily obscure understanding. They can make

ethnographers less attentive to evidence that undermines positions they support and can tempt them to make neat, coherent and intellectually compelling arguments in support of those positions which hide the complexities and contradictions that individuals, let alone populations, display. My conviction is that working towards greater justice in the world necessitates building relationships across the divisions created by different ideologies, by disagreement and by misunderstanding, and that quality research can support this by enabling greater understanding between diverse perspectives. As my approach to research aligns more closely with what Hammersley (1992) calls subtle realism than with radical constructivism, I believe that research makes one of its most valuable contributions to justice when it is able to further such understanding and to avoid the pitfalls of distorting data or essentialising explanations in the service of predetermined agendas.

## **My Research Approach**

Most of the research that has been done into why state schooling is failing in Papua so far has been done by government and non-governmental agencies that are actively trying to improve schooling in the province. This research, which I review in Chapter Four, reports on the problems of the current state schooling system, both in terms of the way it runs (including problems such as teacher absenteeism) and in terms of the outcomes it fails to produce (including problems such as high rates of illiteracy). Jenny Munro (2009, 2013, 2015) has also done anthropological research into Papuan highlanders' experiences of tertiary education and the ways that their hopes of translating education into cultural and political power and material gain are often thwarted. Like much of the research into indigenous education globally, most of the research in Papua Province about how and why state schooling is failing has focused primarily on schooling itself; little attention is paid to learning outside of school.

In this thesis, I take a different approach. I began this research on the premise that an understanding of the ways schooling is and is not working, and of who it is and is not working for, would be furthered by examining education outside of schooling which does appear to be working, by comparing different models of education, and by understanding indigenous perspectives on schooling. Differences between schooling and indigenous forms of education have been central to arguments about schooling's

failure in other parts of the world and I wanted to discover whether an investigation of such differences in Papua could help explain why state schooling is failing, could enable educators to better serve Papuan needs and ultimately could contribute to addressing the pressing issue of how the tension between the constructive and destructive potential of schooling might be resolved.

My central research questions, therefore, are: "If any of the differences between schooling and indigenous education are relevant to the problem of how schooling can be used to benefit Papuans without harming them, what are they?" and "Why do they matter?" A third, related, research question is "What do Papuans themselves make of the current schooling situation in the Papuan highlands?" These three questions shape my research. They frame my contribution to answering the questions of why state schooling is failing, and, even more importantly, of how schooling can best serve indigenous Papuans' needs.

I carried out my fieldwork in a rural area of the Papuan highlands called Eragayam Tengah (Central Eragayam) where the Walak residents had access to three primary-level schools. One is a private school run by a foreign-directed NGO called Ob Anggen, one is a state school which rarely opens and one is a state-funded school (run as part of a state-private partnership) which operates in a manner typical of 'failing' state schools across Papua (see Chapter Four). I chose to use Ob Anggen as my comparator to Walak education because it was enthusiastically welcomed by the vast majority of the residents of Eragayam Tengah as the kind of schooling they want their children to have access to and because it employs principles acclaimed by international development agencies as foundational to schooling success (ACDP, 2014, International Relief and Development, 2013). In other words, it is in comparison to schools like Ob Anggen that state schooling is pronounced to be failing. Furthermore, to my knowledge the Ob Anggen school was the only primary school in the area that had ever opened daily or consistently followed a curriculum. It was introduced to Eragayam Tengah less than two months before I began my fieldwork and as such I was able to observe from the start the ways it affected children's lives, the ways Walak people responded to its practices and the ways any conflicts that arose were negotiated. The recent introduction of the first reliably active primary school to an area that had long

had access only to barely operational state schooling, and in which many children were not enrolled in school at all, made for a fascinating opportunity to study a particular Papuan population's interactions with and ambitions for schooling.

A typical educational anthropological approach to such a study would have involved carrying out an ethnography of Ob Anggen, focusing on children's experiences of schooling and school teachers' practices. Instead, I give more of my attention in this thesis to the ethnographic context in which the three primary schools are situated, and to the teaching, learning and knowledge creation that happens outside of schools. By decentralising schooling within my research, I make space for perspectives which do not assume that schooling is the best or the only way of bringing up children to be informed and competent members of society. Within educational research, the dominance of schooling as a subject of research reflects the dominance of schooling as a model of education globally, and this can obscure important insights into schooling's processes and outcomes which are held by people for whom schooling is an unfamiliar way of educating children.

Making life and learning outside of school my focus, and using Ob Anggen as my comparator, highlighted perspectives that I would not have gained from undertaking an ethnography of the school itself. For example, I gained an understanding of why people continue to invest in state schooling despite its failures and I learned what many Walak parents perceive to be the different purposes that schooling and indigenous education serve. I was also able to examine the claim, prominent in literature from other parts of the world, that attending schooling alienates children by causing them to miss out on indigenous forms of education (see Chapter Seven). Most importantly, I compared the values and visions of success being promoted by Ob Anggen with those held by most of the Walak people I knew, which made misunderstandings about the purpose of schooling central to my argument. The insights I gained into the differences between Ob Anggen and Walak indigenous education shed light on why state schooling runs as it does in Eragayam Tengah. Although the conclusions I draw are context specific, like Robinson-Pant (2000) I claim that my ethnography has wider relevance. The dynamics influencing education in Eragayam Tengah echo those at play in Papua Province, and as such the research has

implications for education and development in the entire region (see Chapter Nine). Although reports consistently highlight the dire state of schooling in Papua, the determination of those attempting to steer Papua towards a more just and prosperous future should not be underestimated. My hope for this research is that it will contribute to their efforts.

# Chapter Two: Ethnographic Context

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According to the latest Indonesian census data, the population of Papua (for both provinces) is about 3.6 million, of which 2.83 million live in Papua Province (BPS, 2010g). About three quarters of those who live in Papua Province live in rural environments, along the coastline, or in the forested highlands accessible only by foot or plane (BPS, 2010g, UNDP, 2005). Papua Province is rich in natural resources, with the second largest rainforest in the world and the largest gold and third-largest copper mine in the world (Butt, *et al.*, 2002, Justitia et Pax, 2010, Kirksey, 2012, Rutherford, 2008, UNDP, 2005). Despite these resources, Papua has the lowest Human Development Index rating in Indonesia, with available statistics suggesting that HIV/AIDS is more widespread, maternal mortality is higher, the poverty gap is greater, and life expectancy is lower than anywhere else in the country (UNDP, 2005, World Bank, 2015). Concern is heightened by evidence which suggests that indigenous Papuans are more badly affected by these problems than migrant Indonesians, who now make up about 35 percent of the population (Justitia et Pax, 2010, Rutherford, 2012).

Eragayam Tengah, which is in the rural highlands of Papua Province, is populated by Walak subsistence farmers who hold a strong egalitarian ethic, who esteem social relationships highly, and who manage these social relationships according to the values they have for individual autonomy and for meeting obligations to relatives. Walak people understand the world to be populated by spirits as well as humans, and their beliefs about these spirits inform their everyday activities. Walak values and beliefs shape what children learn outside of school as well as shaping Walak ambitions for and experiences of schooling. This chapter gives an overview of the ethnographic context of life and learning outside of Ob Anggen school.

## **Papua's Political Conflict**

Papua is perhaps best known internationally for internal political conflict, the roots of which date back to decisions made by the Dutch colonial administration in the

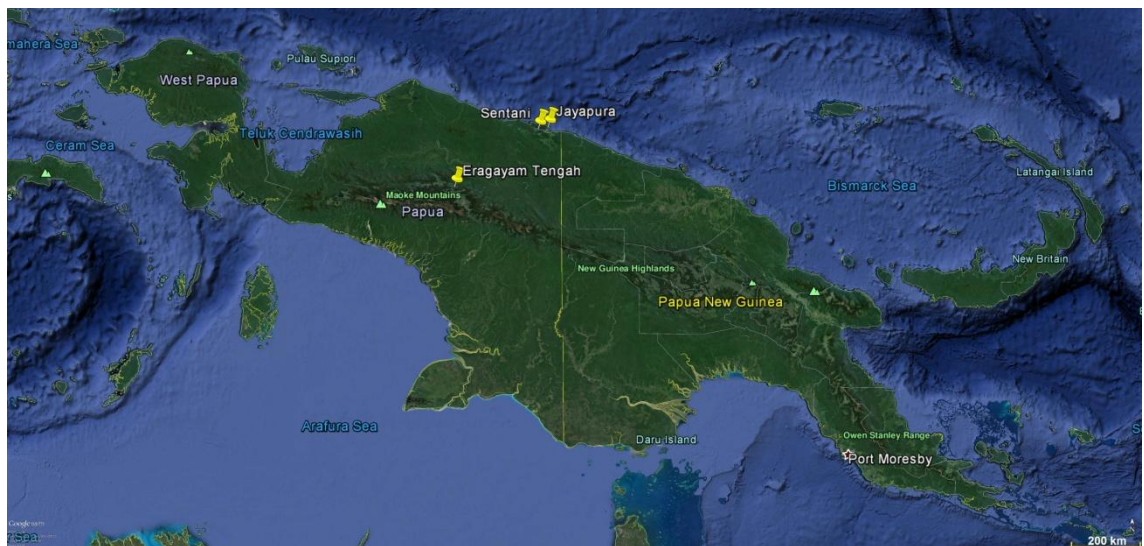
1940s and 50s. Having refused to include West New Guinea, as Papua was then called, in the negotiations for Indonesian independence in the late 1940s, the Dutch steered a group of elite Papuans towards leading an independent Papua throughout the 1950s, leading to the inception of the Morning Star flag, a national anthem and the New Guinea Council (Timmer, 2005). Meanwhile, the Indonesian Suharto government claimed that Papua should be liberated from Dutch colonisation by joining Indonesia. The Morning Star flag was raised for the first time on December 1, 1961, when Papua was still a Dutch colony, just weeks before Indonesian military invaded the region (Kirksey, 2012). A serious threat of military conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia over Papua motivated the USA to sponsor United Nations negotiations, which led to the New York Agreement of 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1962. The New York Agreement stipulated a transfer of authority for Papua to the UN Temporary Executive Authority, which would then hand administrative responsibility over to Indonesia on the condition that the Papua people would have a referendum about their future before the end of 1969 (Glazebrook, 2002, Timmer, 2005). This decision was seen by some Papuans as Indonesian occupation, and the Free Papua Movement (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka* or OPM) was founded to resist it. In 1969, Indonesia staged the so-called Act of Free Choice to meet the conditions of the New York Agreement. 1,020 representatives were chosen to vote on behalf of the entire population; these representatives, under Indonesian surveillance and threat, voted to become part of Indonesia (Kirksey, 2012, Timmer, 2005).

The conflict between the Papuan claim to self-determination and the Indonesian claim to govern Papua has continued since. In the early years, OPM's military activities were prominent in the independence movement, but in recent years dialogue is more prominent shifting the focus to shared memories of suffering and oppression, which has garnered more popular support. A growing evidence base of human rights abuses by the Indonesian military has also brought international attention and backing to the cause (Kirsch, 2010). The Indonesian government has also changed its strategies over the decades. President Suharto's New Order regime initiated the militarisation of the region which is still in evidence today. Some argue that the abuses and losses Papua people suffered under Suharto's leadership, and



since, amount to genocide (see Butt, 2005, Kirksey, 2012, Timmer, 2005 for comments on this). The late 1990s, under President Habibie's and then President Wahid's leadership, were a time of greater dialogue between Papuan nationalists and Jakarta, during which gatherings, debates and flag raising events were allowed to take place, but this did not last long. By the end of 2000 increased militarisation and surveillance marked the region once again. Despite these tensions, in 2001 Papua was granted a new status of Special Autonomy within Indonesia receiving 70% of oil and gas and 80% of mining revenues, as well as the right to have indigenous people in regional positions of authority. Those provisions are still in place, but there is widespread disillusionment with the ineffective implementation of them over the last 15 years and the Papuan fight for independence continues to attract regional and international support.

## Eragayam Tengah and Ikonium



**Map of Papua and Papua New Guinea Showing Location of Eragayam Tengah**

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

Indonesian's administrative subdivisions are provinces (*propinsi*), regencies or cities (*kabupaten* or *kota* respectively), districts (*distrik* or *kecamatan*), and villages (*desa* or, in some urban areas, *kelurahan*). Eragayam Tengah - which means "Central Eragayam" - is not an administrative subdivision; it is a grouping of all the areas served by five churches. It falls within Eragayam District, which is one of five districts in Central Mamberamo Regency (see map on page 37). The word "Walak" is actually a greeting in the Walak language, and it is likely that this is where the name comes from

(see Sillitoe, 1998b, 10 for comparative examples regarding naming). Regardless of its origins, it is a name Walak people now use to describe themselves, and to distinguish themselves from the neighbouring Dani and Lani.

To my knowledge, Walak people have never been the focus of an anthropological study, though a handful of Walak students participated in Munro's (2009) doctoral research. Of those people who are represented in the ethnographic literature, they are most similar to the Dani, who are their neighbours to the south, and the Lani (also called the Western Dani) who are their neighbours to the northwest. Ploeg's (1969) research on Wanggulam Lani was carried out close to Bokondini, which is a large village with a military post, a small (occasionally operational) clinic, a single row of shops and an airstrip used by small mission planes. Bokondini is also where Ob Anggen has its headquarters and one of its schools. The Dani feature in a number of anthropological works including those by Heider (1970, 1979), Gardner (1964), Butt (1998, 2005, 2007) and Munro (2009, 2013, 2015). Within the Dani area is Wamena, the capital town of the highlands, and the only town within reach of Eragayam Tengah which is served by commercial flights to and from Sentani (the nearest airport to the Papuan capital of Jayapura, see map on page 34).

Eragayam Tengah lies on the side of a mountain and ranges in altitude from roughly 1500 metres to roughly 2100 metres. It is loosely bounded by the River Mudli to the East, by the River Naghi, which feeds into the Mudli, to the North, and by a ridge to the West (see Chapter 3 regarding the difficulties of bounding such areas).<sup>7</sup> I did most of my data collection within an area I called Ikonium, because of its connections to Ikonium Church - one of the five churches in the Eragayam Tengah region. The other four churches - Efesus, Filipi, Listra and Troas - are each also associated with a geographical area which I call by the name of the nearest church. The maps below give a rough indication of the boundaries of Eragayam Tengah (the outer blue lines) overlaid with an approximation of the Ikonium region (in yellow). They also show the approximate location of the five churches, the three *Sekolah Dasar* or SD (primary) schools and the one *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* or SMP (junior secondary) school that served Eragayam Tengah. Our home was next to the Ikonium church.

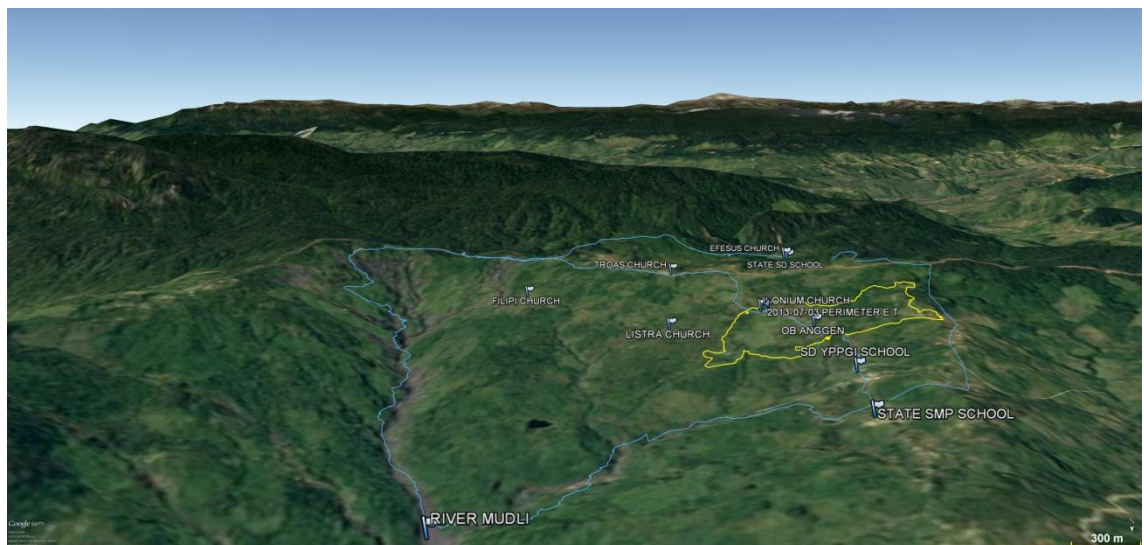
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<sup>7</sup> I am not clear what, if any, natural feature marks the edge of Eragayam Tengah to the South.



***Map of Ikonium and Eragayam Tengah***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data



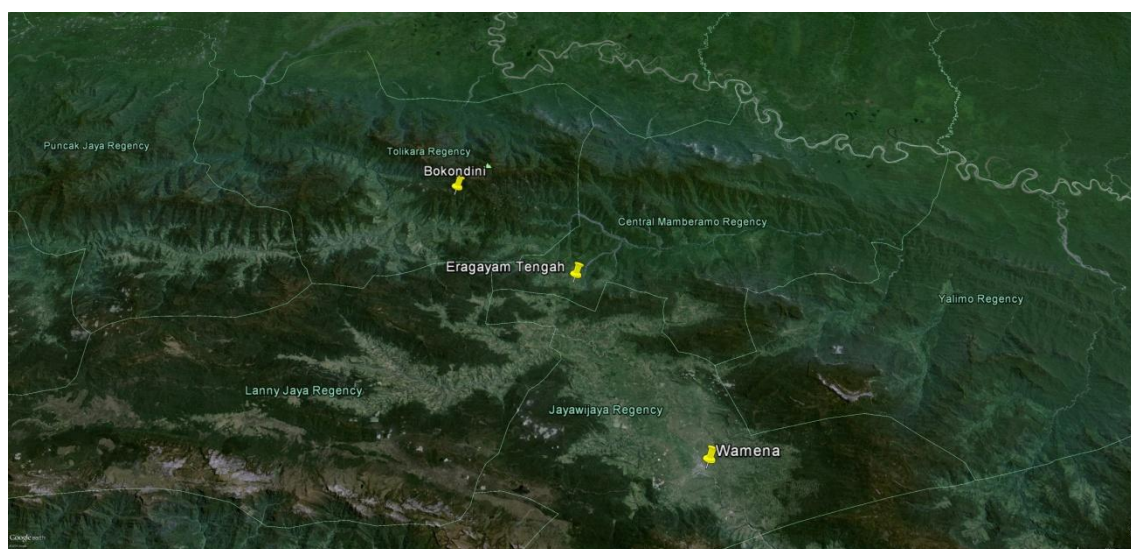
***Map Visualising the Topography of Ikonium and Eragayam Tengah from the North***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

Eragayam Tengah is rural and has little "development" infrastructure. Most people have no power supply and no running water. At first sight, there appear to be no shops, no health clinics, no government offices, no army posts and no police station (in fact, several of the residences double as shops or offices as needed). When I first arrived in the field, the closest market and public transport stop was over an hour's hike from where we lived, and even in a privately chartered truck we could only get within about 20 minutes hike of home. It usually took about half a day to get to



Wamena. However, Walak people regularly travel to and from Wamena, Bokondini, and other places with markets, and during the time of my fieldwork, road access did gradually increase. People also have relatives living all over Papua and even in Papua New Guinea, and a number of people have done stints living elsewhere. As a result, the people living in Eragayam Tengah are not as isolated or disconnected as they at first seem.



***Map Showing Location of Eragayam Tengah Relative to Wamena and Bokondini***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

## **Kinship and Social Organisation**

Kinship and social relationships are central to Walak life; without knowledge of them, a person could not function. Consequently, unlike in formal education, learning about social relationships and their associated obligations is an important feature of children's indigenous education.

## **Naming**

Walak people each have three names. The first is their given name. Boys are called Paite and girls are called Nona (Indonesian for "little girl") until they are given this first name. When children are a few months old they are named and sometimes a celebratory meal is held for the child's relatives to mark the occasion. These were not large feasts though, which reflects the fact that first names are not given much importance. I was often given variations on a first name by different people when I was

collecting genealogies and those who write their names do not spell them consistently. First names may also be changed, usually because a close relative of a child has died. Some children enrolled in state school had a "school name" given by teachers and a "given name" which were used interchangeably. Adults also frequently (and unembarrassedly) forgot relatives' children's first names.

People's second name is their *aluak* (literally, head) name which they inherit at birth from their father.<sup>8</sup> There are three main *aluak* in Ikonium: Karoba, Gombo and Togodli. A few other people have different *aluak*, such as Uaga and Yikwa, because they have married into the area. *Aluak* are divided into moieties: Gombo and Yikwa belong to one moiety, Togodli, Karoba and Uaga belong to the other. To my knowledge, the moieties themselves are unnamed. These moieties are strictly exogamous; I knew of no exceptions. Women keep their *aluak* names on marriage.

The third names Walak people have are the names they are called by. For women, these are the feminine derivative of their own *aluak* and for men, they are the masculine derivative of their mother's *aluak*. The chart below shows what these names are for the three main *aluak* in Ikonium.

<b>Aluak</b>	<b>Gombo</b>	<b>Karoba</b>	<b>Togodli</b>
Masculine derivative	Gomenak	Karobanak	Tabenak
Feminine Derivative	Gomboge	Karobage	Tabuni

**Table 2.1 People's Names as Derived From Their Aluak**

The exogamy rules ensure that a man's mother always belongs to the same moiety as his wife. Consequently, couples' names often sound like pairs: Gomenak and Gomboge or Tabenak and Tabuni, for example. Adults are called exclusively by these names and by kin terms. Children can also be called by them, but they are more likely to be called by their first name, by *kodlak* (girl) or *abedlak* (boy), or by a kin term. On official documents or when being referenced people may be referred to by their first name followed by their *aluak* name.

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<sup>8</sup> Most kinship terms and body parts in Walak are inalienably possessed nouns which only occur with a possessive prefix. I use the root of these words, which in many cases is also the third person singular possessed form. Thus, *aluak* is the root of the word meaning "head."

## Living Arrangements

Walak housing is organised in small compounds, with clusters of related families' compounds grouped together. Walak people refer to these compound clusters collectively as *lokasi* (Indonesian for "location") or individually by the Walak name of the areas they are in. They vary considerably in size and in how their residents are related. The compounds within them also vary - as with Wola homesteads, a compound may be home to just one nuclear family, or several related families (Sillitoe, 2010a, 22). Most compounds are comprised of a men's house (*belamu*) at the far end of the compound opposite the entrance, flanked by women's houses (*uma*) facing each other. Cooking houses (*konela*) may be interspersed between women's houses or slightly set off from them towards the edge of the compound. Compounds often have small gardens, pig sties and fenced pig runs in them too (similarly to Lani and Dani, see Heider, 1970, 253, Ploeg, 1969, 9). Many cooking houses have pig sties built into them.

Men's houses are shared communally by all the men who live in a particular compound, and men from other compounds are free to sleep in them too, but each married adult woman usually has her own house where she sleeps with her children and, often, with adult female relatives. Sleeping arrangements are flexible and vary considerably between houses. For example, one woman slept in her house alone as her only child was a boy who was old enough to be sleeping in the men's house with his father. Another women's house was shared between two widows. Many were used by several related adult females who shared the house together with their respective children. One abandoned men's house was turned into a women's house when the women's houses in that compound began to deteriorate. Some children even embarrassedly told me about one house in which men were sleeping on the top floor and women were sleeping on the bottom - a highly eccentric arrangement! Men's houses are even more flexible: the men and boys who sleep in them varying from night to night depending on visitors' and individuals' movements.





***A compound in Kudluduaghi***

Source: J. Hughes



***A compound in Wiyagebagha - the buildings are (from left) a cooking house, a women's house, a men's house, another women's house and another cooking house***

Men's houses are used to hold meetings, socialise in the evenings, and rest in the day as well as to sleep in. They are also important symbolic structures: spirits (*mongar*) are said to spend time in and around the men's house and to watch events from them. Women's houses are used for sleeping, and for sexual intercourse, when husbands visit their wives there (as with the Dani, see Heider, 1970). Women who share their houses sometimes chat at night, but most women's socialising happens in the cooking houses and in the gardens during the day.

### **Social Organisation**

As with the Dani, a Walak person becomes part of their father's *aluak* (equivalent to what Heider calls sib), and hence moiety, from birth. However, there are a large number of people with the same *aluak* and sharing an *aluak* does not suggest that people share common ancestors nor that they know each other. Those relatives who do share a common ancestor, or are at least conceived of as sharing a common ancestor even if the exact relationships cannot be traced, are called *umbu*. There are usually a large number of potential people who could fall into this category, but those who are significant close relatives are those who live nearby (and those who they lived near when they were growing up, if different). Thus, as is common across the New Guinea highlands, kinship and residence are two important organising principles of relatedness for Walak people.

There are two groups of classificatory kin that Walak children are taught to recognise. The first group are their fathers' relatives, who are people of the same *aluak* as they are, living in close proximity, such as their siblings, father's siblings, father's siblings' children and father's parents. All such father's relatives of the same *aluak* are called "*nogari*" - my friends. It is a term that implies mutual support, affection and obligation. One's own siblings, father's siblings and father's siblings' children can also be called *neyak* (my older sibling) or *naorak* (my younger sibling). Walak men have a spoken and observable preference for living with or near this set of kin, and for cultivating the land their parents gardened. Men also feel a spiritual responsibility for ensuring that some male descendents remain where their ancestors lived in order to appease the spirits that live there.



The second important set of kin is one's mother's relatives. All one's mother's close kin are recognised as relatives, but the most important of these relationships are one's mother's brothers, called *ombaye* (father) or, sometimes, *om* (uncle, in the local Indonesian). Interestingly, *ombaye* is also the term used for one's biological father.<sup>9</sup> The terms used for one's sister's children - in other words the reciprocal terms for *ombaye* - are *ambiko* and *agha*, which are both consistently translated by Walak people as *anak* (child, in Indonesian). All of one's mother's brothers and their male descendents, and one's mother's classificatory brothers and their male descendents are one's *ombaye*, irrespective of their age. A mother's classificatory brothers - her *eyak* - include her half-brothers (if her father had multiple wives), her father's brothers and their sons. However, the rights and obligations of the *ombaye-ambiko* relationship are particularly and specifically held by a limited number of these many potential *ombaye*. If a mother has biological brothers then they will play this role. If not, it will be taken on by others with the same classificatory relationship. These particular *ombaye* have considerable spiritual power over a child's life, and people fear making them unhappy and being cursed by them. When children are born, parents begin giving their *ombaye* gifts and the children are taught, as they grow up, to continue doing so, and to give them preferential treatment whenever they have the opportunity to do so. In return, *ombaye* take a degree of responsibility for the welfare of their *ambiko*. An important part of this is providing spiritual protection. For example, if a person fears that they have been cursed it is their *ombaye* who are called upon to lift this curse. A person cannot marry anyone she or her father call their *ombaye* nor any of their traceable descendents (a person's mother's *ombaye* are automatically excluded because they belong to the same moiety as the person themselves).

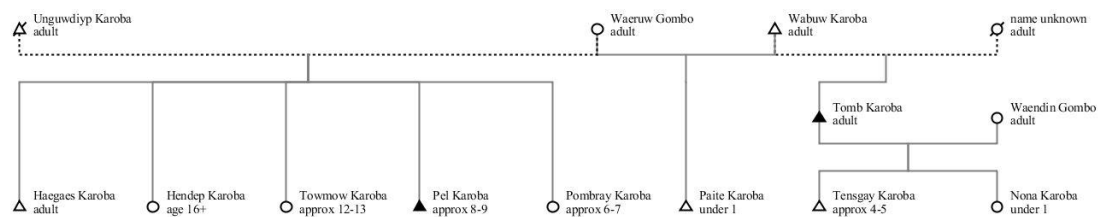
Walak people's kinship relationships with their fathers' and mothers' kin also affect their marriage relationships. A woman's husband's kin are usually the relatives that she will spend her adult life living near. These relatives will be her children's "*nogari*." Likewise, a man's wife's brothers will become his children's *ombaye* and will hold considerable sway over their lives. In both cases, husband and wife view their

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<sup>9</sup> This surprised me, because a person's father has the same *aluak* as she does, whereas her mother's brothers have a different one.

spouse's kin as important relatives whose wishes and concerns they must take seriously.

Heider (1970, 70) said that "the Dani are typical of New Guinea Highlanders in having little interest in genealogy; that is, they have shallow genealogies. A person can trace only his immediate relatives. A grown man remembers those who he has known as child, but rarely more than one generation beyond that." The same is true of Walak people. This is particularly striking among children, who are frequently taught what kin term to call people by, but are not told what the traceable relationship between them is. Thus, when I asked Pel Karoba, a boy of about 8 or 9 years old how he was related to Tomb Karob, a young adult, Pel replied that he calls the man *neyak*, meaning "my older brother." He and I both knew that they did not share a mother, but when I pressed him on what the exact relationship was he told me that he did not know. In fact, as the genealogy below shows, there is no blood relation between Pel and Tomb, but they belong to the same moiety, and now household as a result of Pel's mother's and Tomb's father's marriage to each other, so they are classificatory "brothers."



#### ***Partial Genealogy Showing Relationship Between Pel Karoba and Tomb Karoba***

People reside where they do because they are related to someone in that *lokasi* (area). Families who live in the same *lokasi* are often related through men who share a common ancestor (traceable or not). Usually men from an *aluak* of the opposite moiety will live locally with their families too, and several of the descendents of these two *aluak* will intermarry, though anyone who wishes to marry someone from further away is free to do so. Despite the stated virilocal norm, residence arrangements are actually very flexible and living uxorilocally also occurs. People might move to particular areas where more distant relatives live in order to be near to politically likeminded people, to fulfil their role as a church leader, or to avoid conflict with someone they had been living near. For instance, it is usually a mother's relatives

who step in to adopt a child or an unmarried young adult if their parents die and that child may choose to build their adult life with the relatives they grew up with, despite being from opposite moieties. The relatives of a wife who lives virilocally sometimes move to live with her and her husband. Indeed, any kin relationship could be the basis for a decision to live in a particular *lokasi*.

Gabedloma, which is the large *lokasi* within the Ikoninum area, is a good example of how Walak kinship and Walak residence interact. In addition to myself, Aaron and the Ob Anggen teachers, I recorded eighty-four people living in Gabedloma during my census. Sixty of those I included live in Gabedloma because they are related to one of two brothers. However, the actual relationships do not all follow a virilocal pattern. In fact, although Gabedloma was broadly conceived of as being the home of descendents of Aendabaega and Aegol, by my estimation only thirty-one of the eighty-four people living in Gabedloma were actually living there because they belonged to the nuclear families of Aendabaega, Aegol and their male descendents. See Appendix One for an explanation and accompanying genealogies showing the particular relationships residents of Gabedloma have with each other.

Heider (1970, 62) says that Dani activity, at the time of his research, took place "in the framework of two different sorts of groups, one organised along the lines of patrilineal descent and the other organised in terms of residence." As I have shown, Walak social relationships are also organised by both descent and residence, but in such flexible ways that to describe them as groups is misleading. People co-operate with others who live near them and with those they are related to, and they form groups for the purpose of cooperation, but these groups are fluid and temporary, just as Wola "action-sets" are (see Sillitoe, 2010a, 77-78).

## **Subsistence**

Walak people in Eragayam Tengah, like many other New Guinean Highlanders, rely on swidden cultivation for the majority of their subsistence (see Ploeg, 1969, Sillitoe, 2010a). Sweet potatoes, which are grown in mounds, are the staple. They are supplemented by taro, maize, several varieties of squash, sugar cane, cucumber, cabbage and greens including sweet potato leaves. Walak people, like the Wanggulam,

also grown pandanus fruit, which they harvest seasonally, and banana plants, which do not produce many bananas due to the altitude (Ploeg, 1969). Successful fruit harvests are usually taken to market rather than eaten.



### ***Swidden Gardens***

Walak people regularly travel to markets to trade. They often come back from these trips having bought salt, sugar, coffee, chillies, onions, garlic or sweets for children. Most of the money that comes into the region is not through trade, though, but through the salaries of those who have paid jobs, and through large sums of cash which are distributed through the political system. This can come as cash given in exchange for votes, or as the area's allocation of particular funds set aside for so-called "poor," rural areas.

Walak people keep pigs, chickens and fish (in fish ponds) but they keep these to exchange rather than to consume themselves. Pigs are by far the most important and valuable of these animals. Socio-political exchange is valued highly; it is the primary mechanism by which social life is ordered. Exchange features at all important social events such as weddings and funerals. It is used to build relationships, to gain influence with others, to appease spirits, to resolve conflict, to arrange marriages and, less

frequently, divorces and to maintain *ombaye* and *ambiko* relationships. It occurs on all scales, from the everyday exchange of food and labour, to the large-scale, public exchange of pigs at events.

There is little specialism in Walak subsistence activities, except by gender (see below) and age. The exceptions to this rule are an array of roles that Walak men hold, some indigenous, some that originate with the Indonesian local government system. One of these is the *dao kepala inombaye* - the 'head' or 'father' of earth oven feasts - who supervises apportioning food, particularly pork, in such a way as to keep the spirits (and human guests) happy.<sup>10</sup> According to one man, a person might have that role for three or four years, perhaps five or six if he is good. If he is not good other men will tell him that he is being replaced. Different people play this role on behalf of their *aluak* in given areas.

Another title some men hold is *kepala suku*. This literally means "head of the tribe" in Indonesian, but Walak people use the Indonesian word *suku* as a translation for *aluak* or *umbu*, not tribe. The term *kepala suku* can therefore be used to describe the most prominent man among a small set of relatives, equivalent to a Lani *ap ngwok* or Dugum Dani *ab gogtek*, a "big man." Ploeg (1969, 13) calls these people leaders but Heider (1970, 89) challenges the view that "big men" are really leaders among the Dani, saying, "Of the hundred or so adult men in the Neighbourhood, informants were willing to call all but one or two *ab gogtek*. In this sense the term may be better understood as normal men, men who fight, farm, have at least one wife or are only temporarily bachelors." Heider's description of *ab gogtek* rings true with the egalitarian ethos Walak people hold. Whereas some men are more influential than others due to their prowess in exchange or their prominence among a particular group of kin, and whereas some have specialist roles, none have the authority to control others. Furthermore, all men's influence waxes and wanes over time. The only exceptions are the very few men (I knew of only one) considered "crazy" or demonised. These men are tolerated and included in men's activities, but have next-

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<sup>10</sup> Earth ovens provide a means of steaming food between layers of heated rocks (see Chapter Five, page 152 and Heider, 1970, 47-48 for further description). Walak people use outdoor earth ovens at feasts. Many cooking houses also have an earth oven pit in them which may be used for cooking after a small work party, for instance.

to-no influence over proceedings. There is also, confusingly, a salaried government position for a *kepala suku* to represent each *lokasi* on the team of the *kepala desa* (head of the village, an elected position). Altogether, Ikonium had twelve salaried government positions, including *kepala desa* (village head), *sekretaris* (secretary), and *kepala suku* (as above). Church leadership roles also represent a form of specialism. Finally, men and women can apply to be salaried nurses, midwives or teachers. None of these roles exempt people who are locally resident from doing non-specialised subsistence activities such as gardening and keeping pigs.

Walak people recognise three very broad age categories: children (*kodlak* for girls, *abedlak* for boys), adults (*kwe* for women, *ab* for men) and older adults (*kwe angok* for women and *ab angok* for men). These terms are similar to those recorded by Ploeg (1969) though he only mentions the first two categories. The Lani term "*ap ngwok*" (big man) does sounds closely related to the Walak "*ab angok*" (the differences may even be due to different orthography as neither language is commonly written). However, for Walak people, the term *angok* was used for men and women, and was definitely connected to age. One man translated it as "*umur orang tua*" ("the age of old people" in Indonesian).

## Spiritual Beliefs

Walak people's social, supernatural, and economic activities are not compartmentalised from each other, so Walak activities cannot be understood in isolation from their spiritual beliefs. The Walak world is populated with spirits (*mongar*), including ancestor spirits, spirits who inhabit the forest and spirits who live underground, who must be appeased in order to avoid disaster. Walak people are constantly aware of these spirits and many of their actions are geared towards appeasing them. Sickness and death are often attributed to spiritual activity. Gogoda Karoba explained to me that if someone is killed, and there is not appropriate retaliation, then the spirit of the person who was killed will bother humans. He attributed a headache he had earlier in the week to the spirit of a man his father had killed, for which there was no retaliation. A person might also be sick because their maternal uncles have put a curse on them. Some women are thought to be able to kill people supernaturally by looking at them (see also Ploeg's description of *mum*, the

supernaturally injurious activities women engage in, which concern Wanggulam people more than any of the sorcery men practise, Ploeg, 1969, 52-58). When somebody is sick because of supernatural activity, only spirit appeasement is believed to be able to prevent them from dying. There are various ritual means of ascertaining which spirit is the cause of the illness and what must be done to cure it. Usually, a person's maternal uncles are called upon to perform these. If that does not work, the person's father's uncles will be called, and then her mother's uncles. Gogoda told me that if a sickness is caused by *mongar*, medicine may not work on it.

Christianity is also important in Eragayam Tengah. Most, if not all, Walak people in the Ikonium area profess to be Christians, though unlike the Ob Anggen team, many do not understand Christianity to be primarily about having a personal relationship with God or a saving faith in Jesus. Rather, Christianity is about recognising the importance of the Christian God, relative to the other supernatural beings they share their land with, and appeasing him by following the rules that church leaders lay out. This gives church leaders considerable influence over other people's activities, though among young adults their influence seems to be waning. Christianity has not replaced Walak people's other supernatural beliefs. At most, it has made these beliefs slightly less visible by making people uncertain about which aspects of their traditional beliefs they are still "supposed" to believe as Christians. Gogoda told me frankly that no one, not even the church leaders, have given up their beliefs in the old supernatural practices, and my own observations support his assessment. He told me that the "cultural" (*budaya*, in Indonesian) supernatural beliefs, as he called them, are too important to give up, as you can die without them.

## **Gender Relations**

Walak people classify many of their activities according to gender, listing some of their activities as male, some as female and some as both, and making comments about children's learning such as that it is most important for boys to know how to make gardens, and get firewood, and for girls to know how to cook. Men and women also frequently separate into gendered groups, though unlike in some highland societies, Walak people treat separation of the genders flexibly (see Appendix Two). In their gendered approach to activities, Walak people are not unique; gender division of

activities and separation of the genders are both well-documented features of countless New Guinean highland groups although there is significant variation between these groups in how gender divisions are viewed and exhibited (Meggitt, 1964, Modjeska, 1982, Sillitoe, 1998b, Strathern, 1972, 1988).<sup>11</sup>

Men and women's actual behaviour accords closely with the gender classifications Walak adults make. As with the Wola (see Sillitoe, 1985) activities fall on a continuum from those done exclusively by women (such as harvesting sweet potatoes and vegetables and netting bags), through those done predominantly by women (such as cooking, which is always listed as a women's activity but which men actually do fairly frequently), to those done predominantly by men (such as collecting and chopping firewood which is always listed as a male activity but which women do if necessary), through to activities done exclusively by men (such as felling trees and nearly all aspects of construction).

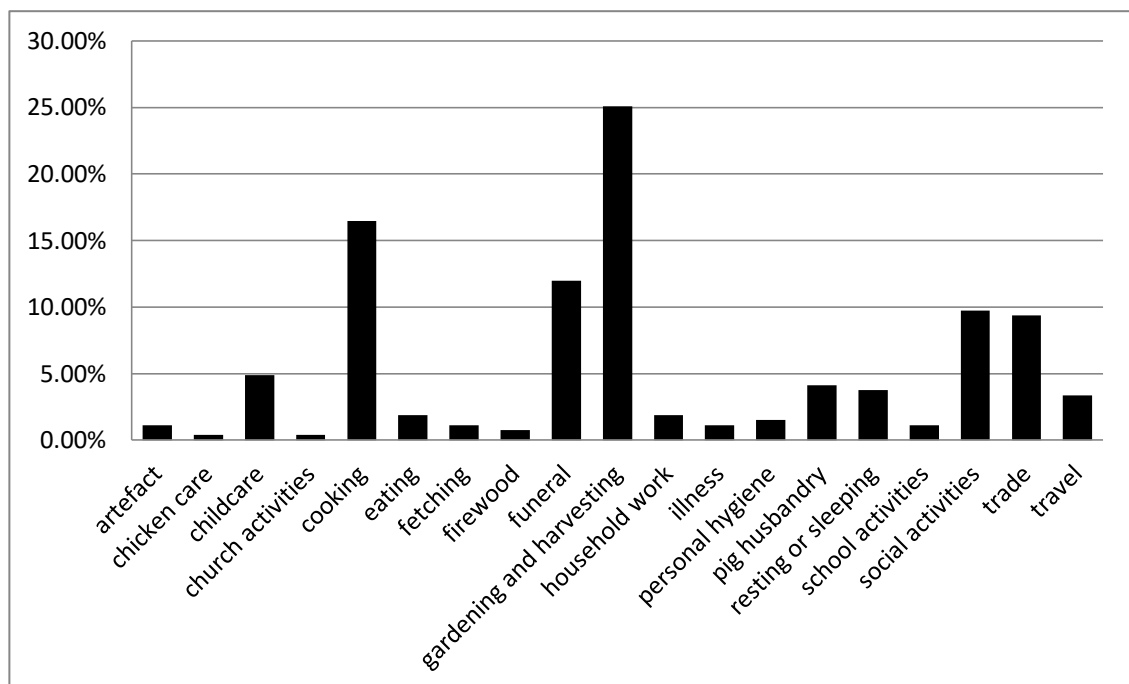
Both men and women engage in subsistence, social and spiritual activities, but each gender has a unique contribution to make to each of these domains. The overall trend, seen in a time allocation study I did (see Chapter Three), is that women contribute more time to subsistence activities and men contribute more time to spiritual and social activities. As the time allocation study was done over two and a half months on a small geographical area and is based on 176 observations of adult men and 267 observations of adult women, the data, when broken down into hours and minutes, are not necessarily representative of people's average weekly time use per activity. Both men and women regularly travel large distances for their activities, and there is a bias in the data towards activities that happened near the residential compounds of Ikonium. Participant observation would suggest, though, that the trends displayed in relation to the gender division of activities reflect accurately the proportional contributions men and women make to different domains of activity.

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<sup>11</sup> A few of the many examples of a gender division of labour in the New Guinea highlands include the Dugum Dani (Heider, 1970) and Lani (Ploeg, 1969) on the Indonesian side of the New Guinea border, and the Wola (Sillitoe, 1985, 2010a), Kewa (Josephides, 1983), Duna (Modjeska, 1982), Mae Enga (Meggitt, 1964), Raiapu Enga (Waddell, 1972), Maring (Maclean, 1985), Melpa (Strathern, 1972) and Tairora (Grossman, 1984) on the Papua New Guinean side.

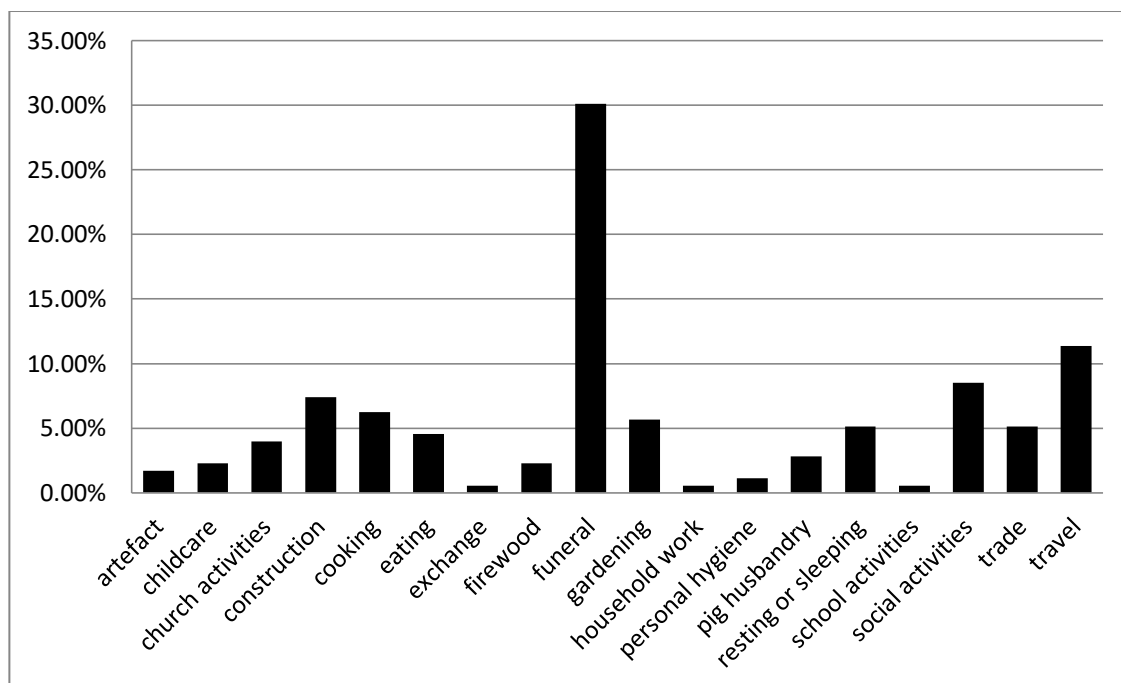


As Graph 2.1 and 2.2 show, about a quarter of the adult women I observed during daylight hours were gardening or harvesting, whereas only about 5.7% of the observations of men were of gardening, and none were of harvesting. Women were not observed in construction activities at all, whereas this made up about 7.4% of observations of men's activities. A considerable 30.1% of observations of adult men were of them engaging in funeral-related activities, including exchange, and while this made up a large part of women's time as well, it was lower at 12%. Socialising made up 9.7% of observations of women and 8.5% of observations of men, neither of which includes eating - an activity which is usually also sociable. Women were observed resting or sleeping 3.8% of the time and men a comparable 5.1% of the time. Spiritual activities other than church were not readily observed using this method, so do not show up in this analysis, even though they are important. My impression is that men spend more time in ritual and spiritual activities than women do. This is supported by ethnographic evidence from other parts of the New Guinea highlands (Butt, 2001, Heider, 1970, Modjeska, 1982), but the assertion, made in some of the literature (for example Modjeska, 1982, 62), that women cannot or do not engage in any ritual or spiritual activities is certainly not true among the Walak.



**Graph 2.1 Adult Women's Primary Time Use by Percentage of Observations**

Based on spot observation data, n = 267



**Graph 2.2 Adult Men's Primary Time Use by Percentage of Observations**

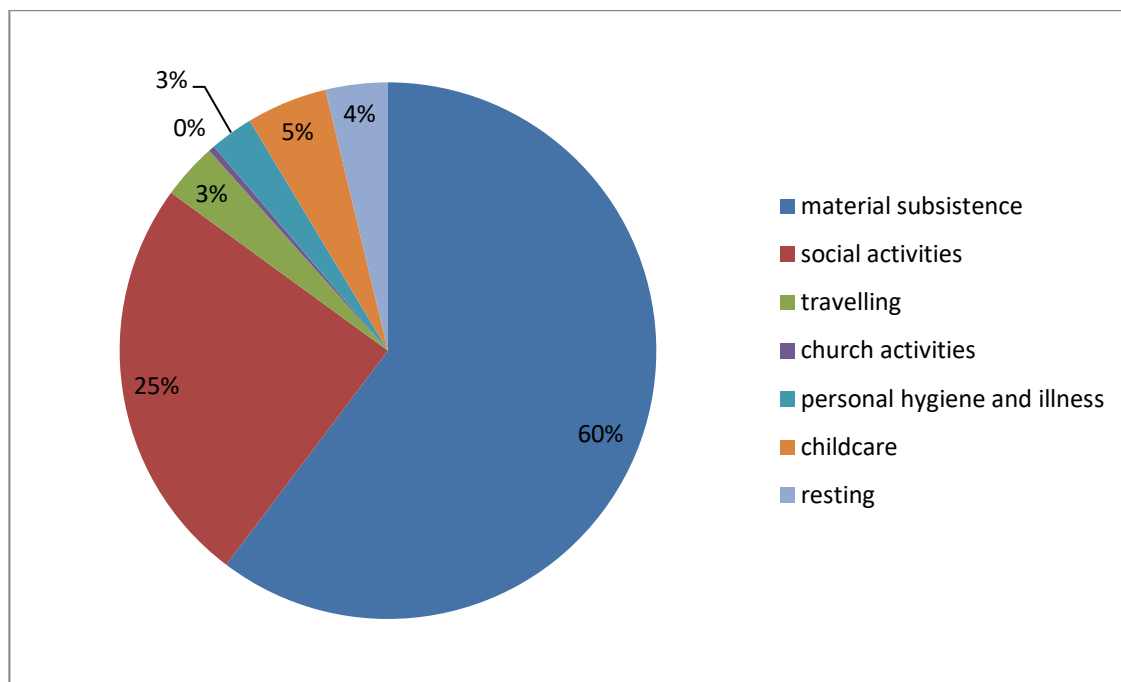
Based on spot observation data, n = 176

When all of the observed activities from the time allocation study are roughly divided into material subsistence activities, social activities, travel, church, personal hygiene and illness, childcare, and resting (see Appendix Three for category definitions) it becomes clear that women spend more time in the activities which I have categorised as "material subsistence activities" whereas men spend more time in fulfilling social obligations, particularly through exchange at social events and gatherings such as funerals (see Graphs 2.3 and 2.4). Men also spend more time travelling.<sup>12</sup>

The classifications which I have imposed on the data are not Walak nor even Melanesian categories (Sillitoe, 2010a, Strathern, 1988) and are necessarily rough - socialising, for example, is sometimes done for rest and for pleasure and sometimes done out of obligation - but I employ them in this context to show that although men and women engage in different activities, and although women spend more time engaged in activities which foreign observers might typically recognise as "work," both

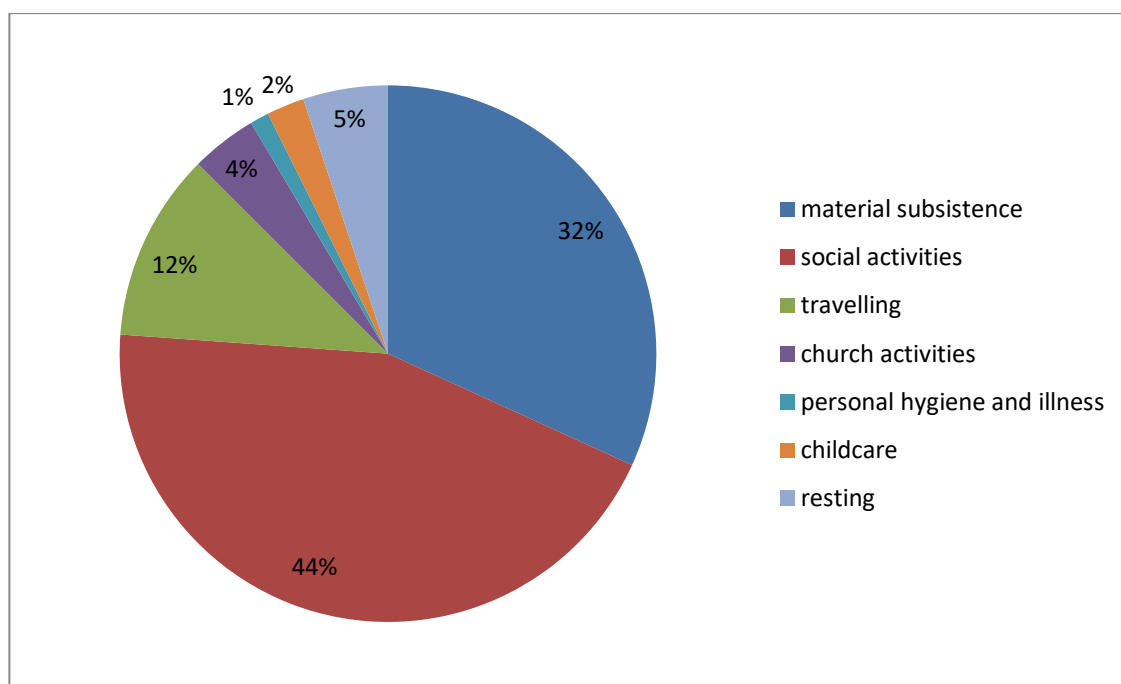
<sup>12</sup> The apparent differences between men and women for time spent in church, time spent on childcare and time being ill are not valid, given the number of observations the calculations are based on.

genders are actually equally active contributors, in terms of time invested, to what Walak men and women consider important activities.



**Graph 2.3 Women's Daylight Activities**

Based on spot observation data, n = 267



**Graph 2.4 Men's Daylight Activities**

Based on spot observation data, n = 176

## Perspectives on Gender in Melanesian Ethnography

An unequal contribution by men and women to different categories of activity is common across the New Guinea highlands (Butt, 2001, Josephides, 1983, Sillitoe, 1985, 2010a, Strathern, 1972, 1988). The question of how differences between men's and women's activities relate to the egalitarian ethic of New Guinean societies has sparked debate among ethnographers. Some argue that women in New Guinea highland societies are subjugated and dominated by men, oppressed by being kept out of the public sphere of life, largely unable to influence politics, and demeaned idiomatically and symbolically (see Butt, 2001, Godelier, 1982, Josephides, 1983, Meggitt, 1964, Modjeska, 1982). Others contend that highland cultures are ones "in which equality is a paramount value," however difficult that may be for Western social scientists to reconcile with the gender differences they observe (Robbins, 1994, 25). Sillitoe (1985) argues that the gender division of labour actually underpins the egalitarian ethos of Wola society by creating separation between those who compete for status and influence through transaction (men) and those who control most of the means of production (women), thus ensuring an interdependence as well as a check that prevents any individual from subordinating others. Sillitoe (2010a) later revises his use of the producer/transactor dichotomy but maintains his argument that highlander men and women make different but equally valued, equally onerous and interdependent contributions to society. Stewart and Strathern (1999, 355) also advocate a collaborative model of gender relations in the highlands, and apply it to ritual contexts to highlight the symbolisation of "women's agency, powers and will."

There has also been an important movement towards understanding gender relations in "Melanesian" terms, though this is a somewhat abstract project given that "Melanesia" itself is an arbitrary construct and the region is highly varied. The most influential deconstruction of the application of Western concepts to Melanesian ethnography of gender is Marilyn Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift* (1988) in which she argues that even though men use women's productive capacities to boost their own status, these interactions are happening in a gift economy, not a commodity economy and are happening between people whose concepts of personhood and gender differ greatly from Western concepts. Thus, we cannot talk of Papuan women

as being exploited by Papuan men. The foundations on which a feminist or Marxist would build such an argument are too deeply embedded within histories, institutions and ontologies both foreign and strange to Melanesian people. Errington and Gewertz (1987) argue that before one can speak of Melanesian women suffering from so-called false consciousness about the domination they are experiencing, one must first establish a definition of dominance which makes sense for the particular cultural context. They argue that dominance is that which prevents "individuals or categories of individuals from becoming what is culturally defined as persons of worth" (Errington and Gewertz, 1987, 64) and that its relativity between cultures results in the possibility of inequality without dominance. In Chambri society, for instance, indebtedness, and therefore requirement to reciprocate in exchange relationships, is, in a sense, an ongoing inequality but it also what produces and maintains all-important social relationships (Errington and Gewertz, 1987).

Contributions to the conversations about gender in Melanesia are still being made (see for example Morgain, 2015 and the rest of the Oceania special issue on 'Gender and Person in Oceania') and it is difficult to know to what extent the dissimilar interpretations of Melanesian gender relations that diverse accounts advance are due to regional variation, to differences in emphasis, to different ethnographers' assessments of such subjective variables as "'the extent to which' women participate in ceremonial exchange" (Strathern, 1972, 298), to the different meanings assigned to culturally relative concepts such as domination or, indeed, to anthropologists' preconceptions biasing their accounts. A generalisation of just how antagonistic, exploitative or collaborative gender relations are in any society, let alone across all of Melanesia, is notoriously difficult to make (Strathern, 1972, 298, Strathern, 1988, 46-47). Nonetheless, given the arguments I make in this thesis about the importance of Walak people's values for understanding children's education, it is crucial for me to briefly consider whether Walak girls and women are excluded from the general Walak values for autonomy and equality.

### **Do Walak gender relations feature domination and exploitation?**

The suggestion that Walak men spend more of their time fulfilling social and supernatural obligations whereas women spend more time in activities that contribute

to material subsistence does not imply that men spend exploit women's labour in order to support their leisure. As I argue in Chapter Eight, the concepts of work and leisure do not apply well to Walak activities, and men and women spend an equal proportion of their time engaged in productive activities (see page 276). The gender division of activities does result in men holding most public positions, but although Walak men claim that they are decision-makers, women are far more influential than such claims imply (see Appendix Two). Furthermore, as I evidence in Appendix Two, women are as autonomous as men are in Eragayam Tengah, and may withdraw from activities which they do not agree with. This autonomy, in combination with the gender division of activities, makes men's influence reliant on women's agreement. Relationships with both men and women are also associated with a claim to resources, whether this be access to land to cultivate a new garden or build a new house, or whether it be access to financial wealth through men or women who gain salaried civil service posts and are then expected to distribute resources to their relatives.

This is not to say that negative attitudes about women do not exist. I have heard women being spoken about in ways that imply that they are less worthwhile than men, and some men attempt to dominate women, for example through violence in marriage (see Appendix Two). Men's claims about their own influence in comparison to women's can seem condescending. However, exploitative gender relations are not accepted by Walak people. They do occur, just as they occur in every society, but they are condemned and usually result in compensation payments and, if between spouses, the breakup of marriages.

The Walak norm is that both men and women are independent, autonomous persons who are able to influence decision-making and access resources. Men and women are responsible for different activities and make different contributions towards the overall wellbeing of their households, but this is not an exploitative arrangement. Men and women have shared values and they collaborate to achieve shared goals through their different activities.

## **Autonomy, Violence and Dispute Settlement**

Although violence as a form of domination is unacceptable to Walak people, physical violence is accepted when it is deemed to have been justifiably provoked in a dispute between two independent actors. The attempt to influence other people is not at odds with a value for autonomy and Walak people sometimes use violence as a means of asserting other people's responsibility for egalitarian outcomes (see Chapter Nine and Stasch, 2015). This occurs between adults in both same-gender and cross-gender relationships, particularly, in the latter case, in marriage (see Appendix Two).

I first heard the story of one such example from one of the male teachers at Ob Anggen, who told me that Haebon Togodli had gone to Wamena to get medical help because his wife Talaem Gombo had broken his arm. I later heard the story from one of Talaem's female relatives. Apparently, Haebon had not been able to have children with his first wife in Jayapura and had moved back to Eragayam Tengah and married Talaem, who had borne him a daughter and a son and was pregnant again. During this pregnancy, Haebon had come into the cooking house, taken a piece of the children's food and eaten it. Talaem was angry, at this and also at a rumour that he wanted to go back to his first wife even though she had not given him any children. She picked up a piece of firewood and hit him with it, apparently without really looking carefully as her pregnant condition made her feel dizzy. The force of the blow broke his arm. According to Talaem's relative, the reparation event resulted in Talaem's actions being deemed justifiable in light of Haebon's actions. Talaem moved back to her natal home where she gave birth to a son who stayed with her. Haebon moved into his older brother's men's house and his brother's wife took over caring for his eldest two children. As in this example, violence between men, between women, between spouses, and between groups as a result of anger was generally accepted when it was deemed to have been justifiably provoked. In these instances, violence is a way of asserting another person's or group's obligation to behave in accordance with shared values.

Violence as a result of provoked anger by adults towards children also sometimes occurred. A physical reprimand by an adult towards a child was common, but it was also usually fairly gentle. If the child cried in response, the adult would usually laugh and comfort him or her. Sometimes adults lost their tempers with

children and threatened them more severely, for example by shaking a piece of firewood at them or by running after them yelling. In such instances, the children usually ran away. If a parent was violent towards his children in a way that was deemed unjustified, other adults, such as the child's *ombaye* or maternal grandparents would intervene. In school, however, children were fairly often physically beaten by teachers for disobedience or other infractions; Ob Anggen was unusual for refusing to use any form of violent discipline. Parents and other relatives did not usually intervene in such instances, though I think that this was more because of the perceived necessity of their children obtaining a school certificate, which the teacher controls, than because the behaviour was acceptable to them (see Chapter Nine). As the Ob Anggen teacher's testimony in Chapter Four shows, parents did sometimes decide a teacher had crossed a line and threaten him with violence in return.

## **Education in Eragayam Tengah**

There are four main types of education available to children of primary school age in Eragayam Tengah: state schooling (see Chapter Four), private YPPGI schooling which is partly state-funded (see Chapter Four), private Ob Anggen schooling (see Chapter Five), and education outside of schooling (see below and Chapter Six). In addition, some informal church evening classes for girls run fairly regularly and teaching for the church congregation occurs every Sunday in the service. A few children stay with relatives in other areas such as Wamena in order to attend SD (primary) and SMP (junior secondary) schools, and as there is no *Sekolah Menengah Atas* or SMA (senior secondary school) near Eragayam Tengah, it is common for young adults to live elsewhere to attend school. Holidays are lively times as SMA and university students return home to visit family. Some adults in the community have accessed adult education - such as training in midwifery, theology or basic health care - in other parts of Papua and hold associated roles in Eragayam Tengah. They are usually proud of having been trained by outsiders, especially if those outsiders were foreigners.





***The SMP school***

There is also an SMP (junior secondary) school just outside of Eragayam Tengah. This school was open and active and most (up to 80%, based on the Ikonium population) of the children of the appropriate age who lived in Eragayam Tengah were enrolled there and attended regularly. As the focus of my research was on primary schooling and as the SMP school lay outside of Eragayam Tengah, I spent little time there. I observed enough, however, to know that the SMP teachers, who included Papuans and teachers from other parts of Indonesia who had been placed at the school temporarily, were more engaged and less frequently absent than those at the state-funded SD schools (see Chapter Four). Indeed, in the time allocation study I did, 55.88% of observations of SMP-age teenagers were of school activities.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, a number of the school's practices did not align with official state-schooling policy. For example, students were charged for examinations; in 2013 the cost per student was one pig, one chicken and Rp.250,000 (approximately £16.50). Parents also accused teachers of enrolling children under the wrong names, and criticised the SMP head

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<sup>13</sup> True frequency at 95% confidence intervals, 47.54% to 64.23%.

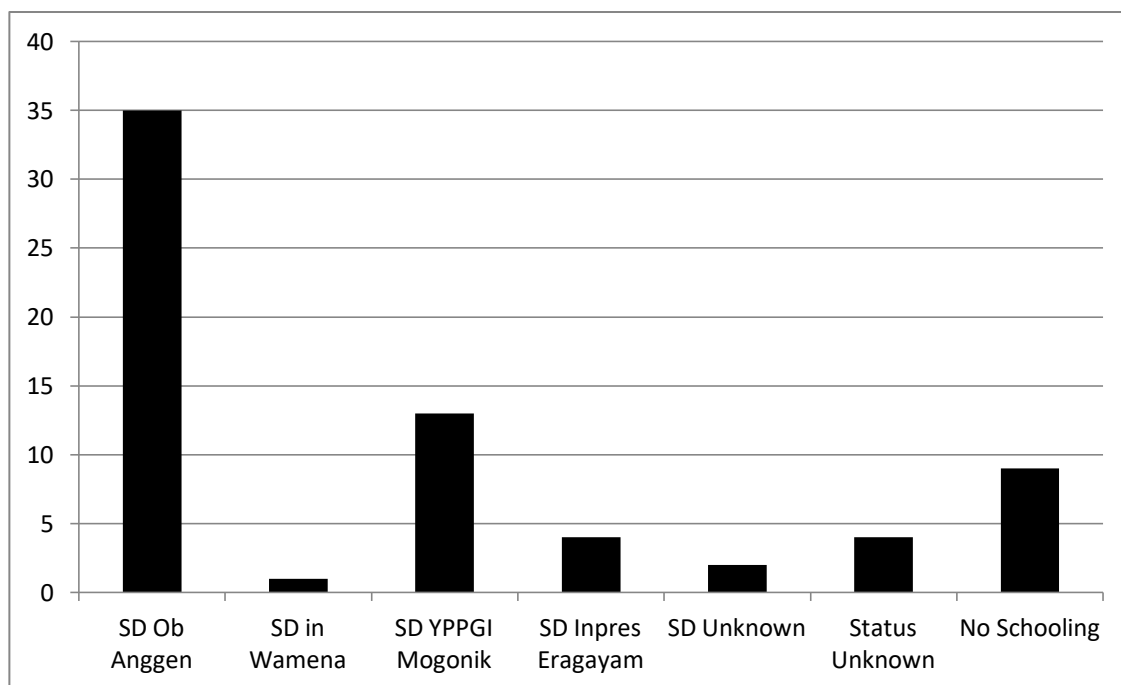
teacher for failing to provide *Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian* (Letter Declaring Exam Results - a letter reporting a student's examination results while certificates are being processed) in time for students to enrol in SMA schools.

### **Distribution of Children Between Primary Schools**

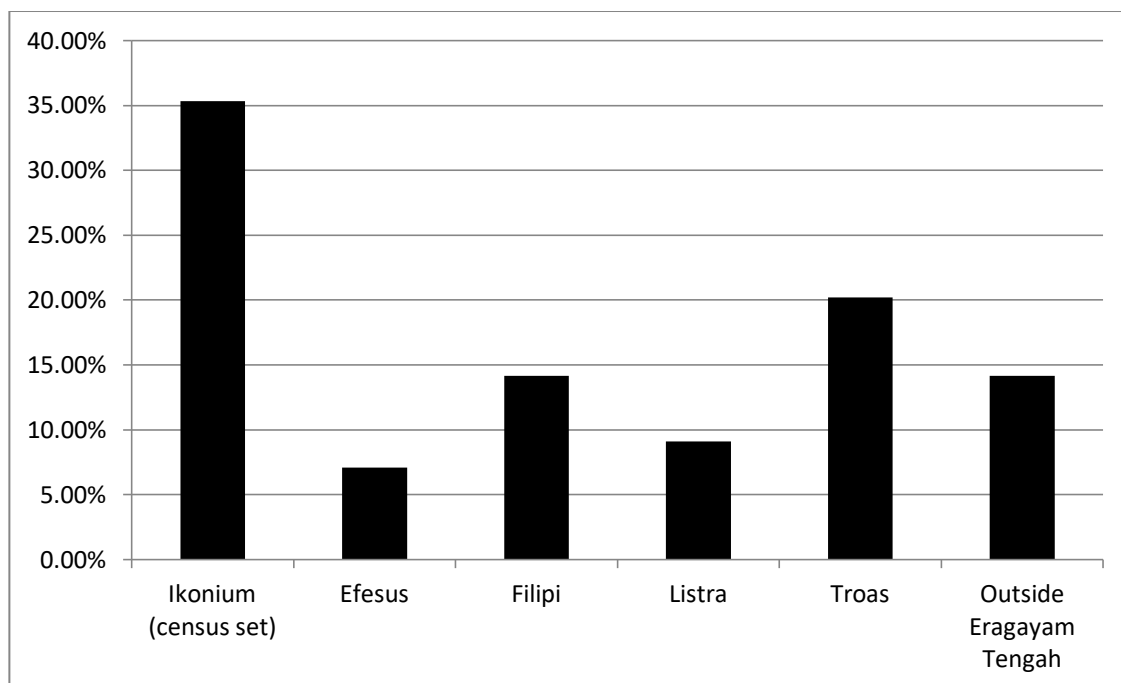
The data I have on the distribution of children between the different schools in Eragayam Tengah is based on the census of the Ikonium population (see Graph 2.5). These are not representative of Eragayam Tengah as a whole because Ikonium contributed a greater number of pupils to the Ob Anggen student body than any other area of Eragayam Tengah did (see Graph 2.6), and the proportion of children who did not attend school or only attended school rarely was also lower in Ikonium than it was in other areas. Nonetheless, it gives an indication of children's access to primary schools in the area.

In the academic year 2013-2014, 35 of the 69 children of SD-age in Ikonium were enrolled in Ob Anggen (about the same proportions apply to 2012-2013, Ob Anggen's first year of operation). One child was enrolled in school in Wamena. Thirteen children were reported as being enrolled in SD YPPGI Mogonik - though only seven of them were actually observed at SD YPPGI Mogonik during thirty randomised observations made of the school (see Chapter Four) - and four were enrolled in the state SD school. The remaining children were divided between three categories: two were children whose families told me which class they were in, but not which school. I never observed these children actually attending school. I recorded four of the children as "status unknown." None of these children attended school - I never observed them in school in any of my school observations, on their way to school at any point in the course of participant observation or during the spot observations, and in several cases I spent days with them on school days during which they never mentioned school. However, this is not enough evidence to be sure they were not officially enrolled in school as school attendance and school enrolment do not necessarily correlate in rural Papua (see Chapter Four). For ten of the children, I was confident that they had either never attended school, had not yet enrolled in school, or had given up on schooling altogether. As these data illustrate, the unreliability of school attendance in rural Papua makes it difficult to record children's access to

schooling accurately, even for a small population. The most reliable and important distinction for my research was between those children who were enrolled in Ob Anggen and consequently attended school daily, and those children who attended school occasionally or never. For the Ikonium population, about half of the children of primary school age fell into each of these categories.



**Graph 2.5 Distribution between schools of Ikonium children aged approximately six to fifteen by number of children**



**Graph 2.6 Approximate Breakdown of Ob Anggen Student Population 2013-2014 by Church Affiliation**

### **Education Outside of School in Eragayam Tengah**

The only education which all Walak children living in Eragayam Tengah have access to is learning outside of school. Walak people do not categorise, standardise or assess what children learn, except that, as Walak activities are gender divided, people assert that there are differences between what boys and girls need to learn. When I asked persons to list things that children need to learn, I received answers that ranged from the specific, like "boys need to learn how to open a garden" to the general, like "our cultural rules" (*aturan budaya* in the local Indonesian). Nonetheless, although children's education is not normally talked about in the abstract, and despite the fact that Walak indigenous education is not formalised, there are a number of shared ideas about what children and young adults need to learn.

As I evidence in detail in Chapter Six, children learn the skills they need for activities such as construction, childcare, cooking, raising pigs and gardening through extensive exposure to others who are skilled at these activities, whom they observe and imitate. These older, more skilled persons are most often older siblings, parents, or people who live in the same *lokasi* as a child, though they may be anyone a child

happens to be with. Children also attempt to do the activities they observe others doing themselves, at first of their own initiative, for fun, and subsequently because they get asked to do contribute to household activities (see Chapter Six). When children do an activity in an unskilled way, they are corrected by older children and adults. Through an ongoing repetition of this process of observation, participation and correction they become skilled. Indigenous knowledge about the names and uses of particular plants, types of wood, soils and other natural resources are learned by the same process. In accordance with the gender division of activities, men sometimes told me that it was their responsibility to ensure their sons learn male skills and their wives' responsibility to teach their daughters. However, in practice, parents display no anxiety about ensuring their children learn indigenous skills as they assume that all children eventually do.

Values are also partly learned through exposure, but they are more explicitly and intentionally taught than skills usually are, with caregivers frequently intervening in children's activities to teach them to share, to participate, to reciprocate, to recognise relatives and to respond appropriately in various social situations. The process by which children are taught, protest against, and eventually adopt these values is described in detail in Chapter Six. What Chapter Six does not show, because it relies on observations from daylight hours, is that a significant part of children's education in values happens after dark, during conversations that occur around the fire in the centres of cooking houses, women's houses or men's houses. The men's house, in particular, was frequently mentioned to me (by men) as a place where sons are taught "cultural" knowledge (using the Indonesian word "*budaya*").

"Cultural" knowledge includes social knowledge such as who one is descended from and related to, what one's social obligations are, and marriage and incest rules. "Cultural" knowledge also includes supernatural knowledge, such as how to deal with sickness caused by spirits, and how to curse people. At least some of this supernatural knowledge is secret and men should pass it to their sons before they die as it is dangerous for sons not to have such knowledge. Other types of "cultural" knowledge include how to manage exchange relationships, where (and on what basis) one has rights of access to land, how to deal with land disputes, how to appropriately resolve

other problems that arise, how to butcher a pig properly and how to divide meat at various events. Men seemed to feel a stronger sense of responsibility for carrying and transmitting cultural knowledge, perhaps because the burden of dealing with social and supernatural affairs falls more heavily on men than women.

In one conversation during which several children were present, the men I was talking with pointed out three young girls (age 4-7) and told me that they are still little and so cannot yet appreciate cultural knowledge. However, I was told, the boy with us (age about 12-13) is old enough to learn it all from his father, who will tell him things like "This is your *ambiko*..." and so on. Another father told me, "I tell [my son] in the men's house how to 'walk straight,' not to steal, not to eat other people's things, not to cross other people's boundaries.." adding that when they are out and about together, the father shows his son how to behave. It was repeatedly and explicitly emphasised to me by various men that fathers teach and advise their sons in this "cultural" knowledge in the men's houses, as their ancestors have always done. One older man listening in to a conversation I was having with his adult son overhead us talking about where boys learn from their fathers and when his son equivocally responded that sons learn from their fathers in the men's house, and also, for instance, on the paths when out and about walking together, this older man interrupted us to assert passionately that it is "in the men's house, not anywhere else!" Though giving advice in the men's house is the responsibility of a boy's father, older male relatives may do so if the father is unable to, as several men are always present.

To my knowledge, there is no equivalent symbolically important place for girls to learn within. Though girls undoubtedly do learn from the women they share a house with, no one ever mentioned the women's houses to me as places of learning. Conversations in the cooking houses were sometimes mentioned as a site of learning for girls by men who were grappling for a female equivalent to the learning that occurs in men's houses, but learning that happens in cooking houses is incidental rather than intentional, and is not supernaturally set apart from learning in other places. Commonly held supernatural knowledge among women is transmitted in the course of everyday conversations. I am unaware of how the supernatural knowledge that only certain women know is transmitted, because women were not open about having such

knowledge. Those women I know who were accused by others of being able to kill through supernatural means denied it themselves.

Both boys and girls also learn much cultural knowledge when accompanying others during the day. Events of all sorts are important for children's learning, from fairly small scale events such as castrating a pig, a work party, a naming ceremony or a small harvest feast, to larger scale events such as the resolution of a dispute, a marriage, a funeral or a political rally. Children attend all such events, observing, freely listening to conversations or disputes, and perhaps even participating, as long as they do not make a nuisance of themselves. Adults are aware that this contributes to children's learning. For example, one man I was informally interviewing at an event pointed to one of the many boys who were joining in with the men cutting up pigs as an example of children's learning.



***Learning in action: a young boy participates in the cutting up of pigs at an event.***





*Each man cutting up a pig is accompanied by boys observing or participating.*



*A young boy observes the cutting off of a pig's testicles while older boys join in*



Some of the things people listed as important for children to learn, such as "giving birth to children," "war" and "funerals," are a reminder that Walak activities and conceptions of productivity integrate the material, social and supernatural. For example, for a particular man to successfully contribute to a funeral involves his being committed to reciprocity and kin-based relationships. It requires that he participate in exchange relationships. It also demands that he know the proper order of events at a funeral, that he be skilled at co-constructing the pyre on which the body will be cremated, and, quite possibly, that he be able to sing funeral dirges. As the dirges allegedly include the names of deceased relatives of the many funeral guests, this is a considerable feat. Walak people do not just expect children to learn *about* funerals, or *how* to give birth to children. They also expect children to actually give birth to children, and to participate in funerals. This does involve learning, but not the kind of learning that can be neatly categorised.

Walak education constitutes more than the accumulation of a body of abstract knowledge. Like all education, it is shaped by its purpose, which is that children become competent, moral, contributing members of society who are autonomous and social in the particular ways valued by Walak people, and who ensure the perpetuation of Walak society. The Walak people I spoke to were confident that children will learn outside of school, just as the generations before them have. Their anxiety is not indigenous knowledge loss; it is that children should have the opportunity to learn non-indigenous knowledge, which they do not feel equipped to teach, and for which want access to schools.

## **Conclusion**

In Chapter One, I argued that in order to address the question of why state schooling is failing and to consider how schooling can benefit indigenous Papuans instead of harming them, it is important to analyse the differences between learning outside of school and introduced schooling, and to consider Papuan perspectives on the current schooling situation in the Papuan highlands. This cannot be done without an understanding of the ethnographic context, as learning outside of schooling is shaped by the physical, social and spiritual landscape within which it is embedded. The ethnographic context also provides important background to an analysis of Walak

people's perspectives on introduced schooling. In this chapter, I have introduced the ethnographic context of Eragayam Tengah, with a focus on Ikonium. I have also introduced learning outside of schooling. In the next chapter, I consider how my approach to research shaped my research and findings.

# Chapter Three: Methods and Ethics

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Anthropological research can be frustrating. This is partly because the ethnographic realities we encounter in the field intrude upon our agendas. Unanticipated frustrations can become the most productive spaces of our research if we let them, but it is not always easy to ascertain whether research is going right or wrong when it does not go to plan. In this chapter, I talk about my approach to research, the methods I used, and the ethical principles that guided my work. I also talk about frustrations, limitations, mistakes I made, power dynamics that worried me and dilemmas I encountered.

It is tempting to tidy up the tale now that I have the benefit of hindsight, but I am choosing not to do so. This is partly because good researchers encourage colleagues to assess the validity of their conclusions for themselves, which necessitates an honest account of the methods and ethics involved in data collection and analysis. It is also because being explicit about the ways in which I sometimes felt out of control of the course of the research process makes the Walak people's contribution to anthropological knowledge production more visible. It also makes it clear how my identity as an ethnographer both limited and expanded what I was able to learn. I also believe that the more up-front ethnographers are about the failures, luck, improvisation and serendipity we experience during fieldwork, the better prepared future students will be to assess which experiences can, and which ones should, be avoided or embraced in their own research.

## **Unpredictable Fieldwork**

This thesis is based on the fieldwork I undertook between September 2012 and April 2014, most of which was based in Eragayam Tengah. After travelling through Singapore, Jakarta, Sentani and Bokondini, I arrived for the first time in Eragayam Tengah on the evening of 6th October 2012 when the director of Ob Anggen dropped my husband Aaron and me at the end of a dirt road, from where we hiked up to Ikonium. At the time, all but one of the Ob Anggen staff in Eragayam were living

together in one house. We moved into their house that evening, and lived there until the end of December 2012.



***The end of the road and the beginning of life in Eragayam Tengah***

My total fieldwork time was seventy-seven weeks excluding a trip back to the UK for my sister's wedding. An approximation of how I spent these weeks gives an insight into the limitations and challenges of fieldwork in rural Papua. Eight weeks were spent trying to get or renew visas and a further three weeks were spent fulfilling other government requirements, travelling or waiting to travel, and buying supplies. Five and a half weeks were spent on holiday, and one week was spent sick in Wamena being tested for tuberculosis. Seven weeks were spent engaged in Ob Anggen activities, such as training days and team retreats, in Bokondini. Of the fifty-two and a half weeks actually spent in Eragayam Tengah, I spent six and a half weeks hosting foreign visitors, four weeks sick in bed, and about two weeks either running the household when Aaron was sick or recovering with him at home. I did not stop learning during these times, but my research activities were more disrupted than usual. This left about forty weeks as "normal" working weeks in Eragayam, though even "normal" weeks often felt full of

interruptions such as requests for health care from neighbours. Below, I briefly expand on some the ways these different interruptions to fieldwork affected my research and my position as a researcher.

## **Visas**

One of the biggest challenges to pursuing research in Papua is negotiating the necessary permission to do so. Arranging visas was draining, expensive and unsettling, and as this was not a part of life that our neighbours in Eragayam Tengah shared I did not think I was gaining much insight into their lives by experiencing it. However, the experience reminded me of the political backdrop to the work I was doing. This was sometimes easy to underestimate when we were living so far from the nearest police or army outpost, but all Walak institutional experiences, including schooling, are shaped by it. For example, state school curricula are dominated by Indonesian materials, the school system is itself imported from western Indonesia, the civil-service jobs that a school education gives Walak people access to are organised according to Indonesian systems and Walak access to political power is constrained by Indonesian fears about Papuans gaining political strength. Walak people are acutely aware of this ever-present political backdrop and the constraints imposed on my activities by the visas I was able to get were a small reminder of the greater constraints Walak people face as a result of the ongoing Indonesian military presence and government surveillance in Papua.

## **Ob Anggen as Gatekeeper**

Ob Anggen was both a research subject and a gateway organisation. The team facilitated visa sponsorship, introduced us to Eragayam Tengah and included us in their arrangements for safety contingencies and other logistics. They also provided my husband Aaron and me with invaluable support, including advice on our local obligations and ethical dilemmas, practical help with rural living, and friendship. Though I maintained a research focus on life and learning outside of school, I committed a higher proportion of my time to Ob Anggen - including joining in with retreats, training and debriefs in Bokondini - than I would have done if they had just been a subject of my research. I also participated in social and spiritual activities and

made some contributions to training and leadership meetings. My motivation was to keep my relationship with Ob Anggen strong and to participate in its community, but these activities also enhanced my understanding of Ob Anggen as an organisation.

### **Aaron's Role**

My husband Aaron and I lived and travelled together throughout my fieldwork. His role in Eragayam Tengah was as a member of the Ob Anggen team. At first I worried about this because I had emphasised to Walak people that I was not there to teach but to learn, and I wanted them to know that I would not be offended by criticism of the school, despite my connections to it. People soon accepted my role on its own terms though, and Aaron's role at the school allowed me to gain an even richer understanding of how Ob Anggen works than I otherwise would have done. Aaron also contributed more to the school's work than I was able to, given my limited resources, visa constraints, and more independent position. His contributions were an important way of giving back to Ob Anggen. His work also validated our visa sponsorship through Ob Anggen; although I had designed my research to be of benefit to Ob Anggen, Aaron's contributions were more immediately tangible. Aaron also helped me as a research assistant and further supported me in numerous practical and emotional ways that contributed to the success of the research.

### **Housing**

Aaron and I were the first to move out of the team house because the other teachers wanted to wait for houses with aluminium roofs whereas we wanted to live in a house modelled on Walak buildings. The day after we arrived, the Walak head teacher, Oreb Gombo, asked us what kind of home we should like, showing us inside a round double-storey men's house and a rectangular single-storey cooking house. We thought that the dark, smoky round houses would be impracticable given that we needed to work indoors sometimes. We did not yet know enough to realise how unusual it was that our neighbour was sleeping in a partitioned section of her cooking house, so we suggested that we could do the same. Oreb passed this suggestion on and soon local men began constructing a beautiful thatched home, designing it as they built. The central room of this home was fashioned after a typical Walak cooking house

with *yalenga* (a type of dry grass) covering the floor and a fire pit in the centre. Two other rooms were built off the sides for sleeping in; these had slightly raised wooden plank floors.

When we asked if and how we could pay for this home Oreb advised us that we should pay for materials bought from town and provide sweet coffee for the people who worked on it. We later learned that we were also expected to cook sweet potatoes for the builders. When the house was finished, we asked to host a feast as a way of expressing our thanks. We contributed seventy-five chickens (bought from Wamena) as well as onions and spices towards this feast, but were outdone by our neighbours who contributed pigs, chickens and the usual sweet potatoes and greens to the feast. Oreb's father also gifted us a live pig. This act symbolised acceptance of Aaron and me and positioned us as people who were obligated to reciprocate. It was an invitation into ongoing relationship through exchange.

Having our own home allowed me to build closer relationships with my neighbours, as we were able to host visitors regularly and participate in sharing and exchanging food. We also had to learn to cook on an open fire, manage our supply of firewood, cook for our pigs, keep chickens, replace the dry grass for the floor, grow vegetables, maintain the thatch, spontaneously host overnight visitors, and perform many other household tasks. This was time consuming, but thanks to Aaron's contributions to these activities, overall they proved to be advantageous as I learned and built relationships through them.





***Our house in Eragayam Tengah***



***Our compound showing the Ob Anggen teachers' house (bottom left), the men's house in front of it, our home, three women's houses, the lokasi entrance and Ikonium church (right)***

Source: J. Hughes



## **Language**

Before I began fieldwork I was proficient in a dialect of Indonesian, so I quickly adapted to using the local version of Indonesian spoken in the Papuan highlands. During my first six months, I focused considerable time on learning Walak. I was warned that Papuan highland languages are difficult and this proved to be the case. I did not have any Walak language resources or a dedicated tutor, but I learned to converse socially, to collect genealogies and to carry out some other research in Walak. However, I did not reach the level of fluency needed to be able to carry out in-depth interviews in Walak or to follow fast-paced conversations. At the beginning of my fieldwork, many women and children, and some men, were monolingual, but I noticed a growing competence in Indonesian language use in the Ikonium area over the course of my stay. I attribute this largely to Ob Anggen's influence, though growing road access to the region probably also played a part. For informal interviews I used a mixture of Indonesian and Walak, which usually worked well as Walak has incorporated a lot of loan words from Indonesian. For conversing with monolingual people about topics that I did not have the vocabulary for, or for understanding speeches at events, I asked whomever I was with to translate. I learned to check my understanding often, and to rephrase Indonesian sentences so that they echoed Walak grammar, as Walak people do. I also used a number of observational methods that did not rely on me having a higher level of proficiency in Walak. In the thesis I use italics to indicate both Walak and Indonesian words, including Indonesian words that have been borrowed into Walak usage.

## **Researcher Positioning**

The previous section outlines some of the ways in which fieldsite practicalities affected my research activities and local relationships. It is also necessary to consider my positioning as a researcher, friend and neighbour within Eragayam Tengah. Berger (2015, 220) argues that researchers' positions with respect to characteristics such as gender, age, personal experiences, beliefs, theoretical, political and ideological stances and emotional responses to research participants affect the research in three ways: access, the nature of researcher-researched relationships, and more subtly, the ways

in which researchers make meaning from their findings. Qualitative researchers particularly value reflection on such effects as a means of monitoring the rigour and ethics of their studies (Berger, 2015). In this section, I consider some of the ways in which my approach and identity affected my findings.

### **Ethnographic Determinism Approach**

“Ethnographic determinism” is a term Sillitoe coined to label an approach which had otherwise remained difficult to pin to any particular theory or ideology, although the approach has a long history in anthropology (Sillitoe, 2010a, 6).<sup>14</sup> The primary principle of ethnographic determinism is that attention to ethnographic evidence should take precedence in anthropological work over any ideologies researchers take into the field. Sillitoe advocates rigorous and thorough collection of ethnographic data, both on how people behave and what they say about how they behave, from a range of perspectives and circumstances. According to the principles of ethnographic determinism, this data should be methodically recorded, analysed and reviewed for the purposes of allowing problems, patterns and issues to emerge and, if necessary, should reshape the researcher's original focus. A wide range of theories and ideologies can then be drawn on to help understand the ethnographic data (Sillitoe, 2010a).

This is the approach I have attempted to follow in my own work. It demands a high standard of the researcher, both in terms of the quality of the research produced and in terms of integrity, two points which are, I would argue, related. I have already indicated in Chapter One how ethnographic determinism affected my analysis of data and how, despite my commitment to drawing on multiple theoretical approaches in my interpretation of data, my own ideological leanings affected how I designed this research. Ethnographic determinism also affected my data collection. I knew before I went to the field that using an ethnographic determinist approach would demand a lot of me, but resolving the tension between the need for open-mindedness, flexibility and a willingness to hold the research agenda lightly on the one hand, and the need to be systematic, to have a focus and to learn what to notice on the other hand, proved

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<sup>14</sup> The term itself is a subtle criticism of the implication that every ethnography needs an ‘-ism’ to label it.

even harder than I had anticipated. The tensions between participating and observing, between immersion and intellectualisation, and between collecting data, recording data and analysing data, are inherent in participant observation, and, as a participant observer in Eragayam Tengah, I felt them keenly.

At first I was overly ambitious: not knowing what was important or relevant, I wanted to "capture 'everything'" (Gross, 1984, 524). As Gross (1984, 524) says, "Many anthropologists are schooled to believe that 'everything is relevant' and no detail should be overlooked." Unsurprisingly, capturing "everything" proved impossible, and attempting to do so sometimes caught me in an unproductive perfectionism in which I recorded too little because I did not have enough time or energy to record as much as I wanted to in my fieldnotes. I gradually learned that the art of being a good ethnographer is not in resolving the many tensions that arise in participant observation; it is in learning to work well within them. Tensions arose between spending time with people, and writing fieldnotes; between collecting data, and running my own household; between the ethical principles agreed with Durham Anthropology Department and those my new neighbours held (as I discuss below); and between structure and flexibility. Choosing to prioritise any one of these at the expense of another would have undermined my research.

Nonetheless, the way I worked within these tensions was affected by who I am, what I value and my choice to follow an ethnographic determinist approach. I spent much time at the beginning of my fieldwork "hanging out," learning Walak, trying to explain to Walak people what I was there for, getting my bearings, building relationships and resisting the temptation to impose my research questions on people too quickly. I also collected data systematically, beginning with genealogies, mapping and a household census, but at first, I used these systematic methods in a way that was highly responsive to the people I was with, often abandoning my plans altogether to follow an interesting conversation or participate in an event. I only introduced more rigid research methods after a full year of fieldwork. For most of my fieldwork, I prioritised flexibility over structure, and immersion over intellectualisation.

This approach caused me, like many ethnographers before me (see Bernard, 2011), some anxiety about whether I was holding my research agenda too lightly. Even

five months into fieldwork I wrote, "It's hard to figure out if [I'm] getting distracted or being flexible and getting rich data" (R. Shah, fieldnotes, 4th March 2013). I dealt with this by regularly reflecting on my methods and questions and communicating with my supervisors when I had the opportunity to do so. I also, with my supervisors' reassurances, intentionally chose to take the risk of keeping my focus wide for the first year, involving myself in activities and conversations that did not appear to be directly relevant to my research questions about education, in order to gain insights that I could not have predicted. During this phase, I learned to hold the tangled threads of my original research questions; new, emerging questions; and part-formed answers flexibly while I focused on building relationships and paying attention to my Walak neighbours' priorities, interests and emphases.

This proved to be a good decision. The shadow method and spot observation methods I used towards the end of my fieldwork yielded a lot of interesting data. However, I am confident that if I had attempted them without the relationships of trust and the level of understanding I had of life in Eragayam Tengah they would have been poorly designed, resulted in inaccurate data, and been difficult, if not impossible, to interpret well. Worse, I might not have been able to negotiate the ethical misunderstandings that arose, which I describe later in this chapter. Flexibility and improvisation work well in Eragayam Tengah, and my research strategy paid off.

### **The Self As An Instrument of Measurement**

Participant observation involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you've seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly. When it's done right, participant observation turns fieldworkers into instruments of data collection and data analysis (Bernard, 2011, 344).

When one is using oneself as an instrument of data collection, as I chose to do by using participant observation as a research strategy, one's identity inevitably affects what data is collected. This was certainly the case in Eragayam Tengah. The way I positioned myself, the way others positioned me, and the relationships we formed affected the specific ways in which I was able to participate and to observe.

One of the aspects of my identity which most Walak people considered important was my foreignness. This affected the way I was positioned in several ways. Being a white-skinned Christian associated with a mission school meant that I had repeatedly to make it clear in the first few months that I was not there as a missionary teacher. European foreigners are generally welcomed in the highlands, unlike Indonesian foreigners. I was occasionally asked if I knew of any news about Britain's potential position as Papua's ally in the fight against Indonesia. I was also widely perceived as someone who might be able to bring material (and perhaps also supernatural) benefits to the area. For example, I heard a rumour that medicines were more likely to work effectively if people received them from me than a local health worker.

These perceptions made it difficult for me to spend more time with some people than others, because doing so resulted in a perception that those people might unfairly benefit from whatever I had to offer. For example, both I and the Ob Anggen staff were told that we ought to be visiting all the five churches in Eragayam Tengah, not just attending our local one. Some children also told me that I should be spreading my focus beyond just Ikonium to avoid upsetting people. One young female adult even refused to visit my kitchen when I invited her to because she was "scared" (*novadle*) that others would see her doing so and gossip about it. I had originally planned to build close relationships with three or four families with children, but it quickly became apparent that I would make my neighbours unhappy if I did not spread my time, and any associated gifts I might bring, more evenly. I was uncomfortable with being perceived as a potential benefactor, because I did not know how best to ascertain and meet people's expectations of me. I also felt unable to spread myself more thinly than I already was and I was sometimes positioned as more powerful and wealthy than I felt myself to be or wanted to be. However, I tried to learn what my hosts' expectations of me were, and, even though I sometimes felt they were unrealistic, I attempted to meet them to the best of my abilities (see page 98).

Being a foreigner also made me a source of fascination and some apprehension to children. Several young children were scared of me when they first met me and would run away or cry if I came near them, whereas braver children would stroke my

hair or skin. Adult women initially resisted my attempts to accompany them, saying that I might get wet, or get injured, or asking me if I could really walk that far or whether Aaron might be angry if I went with them. Interestingly, my Lani friend, Sal, who worked for the Ob Anggen school in Eragayam, told me that local women had been similarly resistant to her requests to accompany them to their gardens on weekends. My adventurous and fun-loving neighbour Tamiy Togodli was one of the first people to allow me to accompany her to her garden, and thankfully others soon followed suit. The better I got to know women, and the more they saw me participate in women's daily activities, the more comfortable they became with me accompanying them further and further afield. Even towards the end of my fieldwork, however, some of my female neighbours who I did not know well responded to my proposals to accompany them for the day with "*novadle*" (I'm scared). Men never expressed this sentiment to me or Aaron (though I rarely proposed accompanying them).

As a female researcher, I spent much of my time with women because of the gender division of activities in Eragayam Tengah (see Chapter Two). Young unmarried men barely interacted with me and were embarrassed and unforthcoming on the few occasions I initiated interaction with them. I had more contact with married men, and many of my informal interviews were with them, but I did not participate in exclusively male activities. The fact that I am married and that Aaron was present was an advantage, as it made it more appropriate for me to interact with men, and with young male teenagers, and for them to visit us and converse with me in our home. Aaron was also able to give me insights from his participation in male activities. The fact that I did not have children was considered strange and was commented on several times. Most of the women I became close to were young women who had only one child or no children. With fewer responsibilities, they had more free time than women with several children, and though I was older than them, I was treated as a peer, I suspect partly as a result of my childlessness.

I am also a practising Christian which further affected my positioning. I participated in church and Ob Anggen spiritual gatherings, though this was not notable in Eragayam Tengah where nearly everyone is at least nominally a Christian. However, although most people in Eragayam Tengah acknowledge both Christianity and

indigenous supernatural beliefs, some are heavily involved in church and consider the church to be an important and authoritative institution whereas others pay little attention to church edicts (though they may attend church). There were few people living in Eragayam Tengah who flagrantly disregarded the church's authority, but there were certainly some who were more concerned with indigenous supernatural beliefs than Christian ones, and who were more willing than others to break rules about polygamy, smoking, drinking and working on Sundays, all of which were banned by church leaders. Often, those who paid less attention to church were people who spent a lot of their time in urban areas. In some cases, there was a correlation between involvement in the independence movement and disregard for the church's authority, as missionary activities have often suppressed indigenous beliefs and traditions. However, strong supporters of Papuan independence can be found in churches across the highlands.

I negotiated a fine line in this regard. My personal faith did not preclude me from participation in most of the activities banned by the local church, and, regardless, I wanted to observe as much as I could for intellectual reasons. However, my association with Ob Anggen and my respect for and friendships with the church leaders made me unwilling to defy the church rules outright, particularly as these rules were widely accepted by many of my female Walak friends. Overall, my relationships were strongest with people who accepted the church as part of community life, even if they did not always follow the rules. These were the majority of the population who lived in Eragayam Tengah. I did quietly break some rules (I skipped church and did laundry on Sundays, for instance) and I participated in unsanctioned events, but my behaviour was largely uncontroversial with respect to church rules. I participated in church services and in Ob Anggen spiritual gatherings. Church services in Eragayam Tengah were always followed by community discussions during which announcements were made and communal decisions were debated. I sometimes used these or Ob Anggen parents' meetings as a vehicle for announcements about my research. These community meetings were not religious; similar discussions were held at funerals or other gatherings of people. Nonetheless, I was probably perceived as more closely associated with the church than many anthropologists are because of my close

connection to Ob Anggen, and because many Papuan highlanders assume that European foreigners are Christians unless they deny it, which I did not.

More subtly, while I got on well with most people, my personality, values, positioning and even research interests made a difference to who I gravitated towards and who trusted me. For example, I far preferred the company of people who challenged me outright if they did not like my behaviour than I did that of people who talked behind my back or interacted with me in a way that I interpreted as attempting to manipulate me for their own advantage. Due to my focus on rural areas, primary schools and adult perspectives, I also spent little time with teenagers of either gender. These personality connections and clashes exist for all ethnographers. They serve to highlight that no group of people is homogenous and that all ethnographic research is affected by the identity of the ethnographer.

I sometimes found personal relationships tricky to navigate in the small-scale and semi-isolated environment I was immersed in. As a researcher, I wanted people to tell me personal details about their lives, to share their opinions and to be honest with me. I did not want them to feel inhibited or censor their behaviour around me. Yet, as an instrument of data collection, I felt that I ought to censor my own behaviour and opinions with my Walak friends, hiding the fact that I had my own beliefs, values and preferences in order to prevent myself from overly influencing what I heard and observed. However, it seemed disingenuous to expect people to share so much of their lives with me if I was unwilling to reciprocate when they asked me to, which people often did. It also seemed ineffective; people can sense when someone consistently refuses to participate as an equal in a relationship and tend to respond by holding back themselves. This is, perhaps, particularly the case where values of equality and reciprocity are highly regarded.

In the end, I struck a balance between reticence and openness. I became good friends with a handful of Walak women with whom I shared some of the personal ups and downs of life. These women also helped me with my research by filling in some of the gaps in my understanding through our conversations. I also tried to give myself about one day off a week when I did not try to record anything - a day as a person who was not consciously an instrument of data collection! I shared openly about life in the



UK when people asked me about it, but I tried to do so in a way that left the interpretation of what I shared open to the listener. This turned out to be beneficial to me too, as it gave me more insight into Walak people's perspectives on the topics we were talking about. Aaron and I also showed pictures, videos, maps and films to people who were interested. Otherwise, I largely kept my opinions and beliefs to myself. I could genuinely laugh or sympathise along with most of the stories I was told but if I disagreed I usually kept quiet, or responded with something ambiguous like "maybe..." or "Is that right?" However, when people asked me outright if I disagreed with something, I never lied. Instead I would respond with something like "That is not what I believe/was taught/had heard/usually do, but tell me more..." With Ob Anggen school staff, I was a bit more open about my opinions, which was an important part of building trust in that environment. I also formed close friendships with some of the Ob Anggen team.

## **Research Methods**

I used participant observation as my primary research strategy simultaneously often carrying out informal interviews. I also supplemented the data I collected with a series of other more structured methods, some quantitative and some qualitative, which I describe in this section.

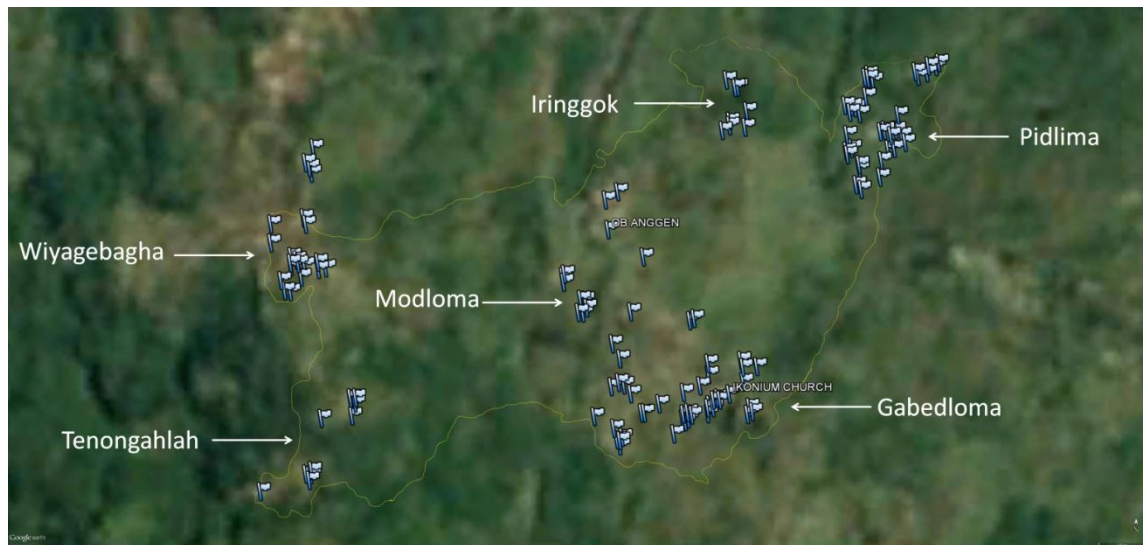
### **Bounding the Fieldsite**

Although I knew that drawing artificial boundaries around a fieldsite is problematic and arbitrary, especially in the New Guinea highlands, I found that once I was in the field I wanted to do so. This was partly so that I could "complete" some methods (like my household survey), partly so that I could use methods that required randomisation from within a defined sample set, and partly because I became fascinated with indigenous categories of belonging. I began asking people about the many Indonesian and Walak categories I had heard used to describe different areas. I received consistent answers about the names of different *lokasi* and fairly consistent lists of which households belonged to each of them. I then tried a number of approaches to establish meaningful groupings of these small *lokasi*, none of which were particularly effective. For example, after hearing one lady refer to someone as a

"Gombo from here" (*yoma Gombo*) I tried using free listing to ask people to list all the *inerve* ("people," or in this case, male representatives of households) from "here" in an attempt to see what scale people most commonly associated with "here." The first people I asked seemed confused and frustrated by my questions because they did not understand what I meant by "here." On another day, three women began bickering amongst themselves about whether particular people belonged "here" or not. Eventually, one of the women got angry and said in Walak (thinking that I would not understand), "Haven't we already told her all our genealogies and now she is asking about households again?" Some people asked me outright, "do you want to include this person or not?" I eventually admitted that though people know who lives where, and though people have ties to particular places, they do not think of households, compounds, *lokasi*, or larger areas as inflexible categories of belonging which need to map coherently onto one another.

Nonetheless, I did need to bound a population, even if arbitrarily, for the sake of some of my methods. The labels that came up most frequently in all these conversations were Eragayam Tengah, which referred to a church region made up of five churches, and Ikonium, which referred to those who "belonged" to the church next door to our house. I was resistant to using these categories because I wanted to use indigenous categories, and these categories appeared to have been introduced with churches. In fact, each church has both a Biblical name and a Walak name, suggesting that churches were originally organised according to existing places. In any case, church membership follows the same patterns as residence, which is determined by who one's ancestors are, and who one is related to.

There are six *lokasi* associated with Ikonium: Gabedloma, Modloma, Iringgok, Teongahlah, Pidlima and Wiyagebagha (see map on page 84). Nearly everyone living in Gabedloma, Modloma, Iringgok and Tenongahlah "belonged" to Ikonium, and about half of the households from Pidlima and Wiyagebagha did too. At least two households who lived further afield also belonged to Ikonium because of their kinship ties to Iringgok and Gabedloma respectively. Significantly, when a young man from one of these households died his body was brought back to Gabedloma and the funeral was held in his relatives' compound there.



***Map of the Ikonium area showing the six lokasi I focused on (flags mark houses)***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

In the end, I decided to make the six *lokasi* associated with Ikonium my geographical focus. I also made a list of everyone living in Gabedloma, Modloma, Iringgok and Tenongahlah, all those living in Pidlima and Wiyagebagha who "belonged" to Ikonium, and the two other households I knew about who also belonged to Ikonium and I focused on this arbitrarily defined list of 261 people in my household survey, mapping, and collection of genealogies. I refer to both the geographical grouping and the population included in my census as "Ikonium" in this thesis.

### **Genealogies, Mapping and Household Surveys**

Like most ethnographers of small-scale societies, I collected genealogies. I found that the most reliable way of doing this was to ask people who their (or other people's) children were, though I was also able to record some shallow historical data. People were sometimes cautious about giving me information about other people's relatives and did not want me to tell those other people that they had given me the information, though no one ever hesitated to give me information about their own families.

I also mapped the six target *lokasi* using a Global Positioning System (GPS) device to mark a waypoint for each building. I visited each of the *lokasi* multiple times and asked people - sometimes in groups and sometimes individually - who slept in each of the men's and women's houses and who the cooking houses belonged to. In

order to check how reliable this information was, I got up early to observe who emerged from a series of sleeping houses, and compared the lists of who had slept in each of them with the lists I had been given of who normally slept there. I expected some differences, as sleeping arrangements are highly flexible, but was encouraged to discover a close overlap. By asking people to list who slept in particular men's houses, and by asking them to list who the *inerve* for each *lokasi* were, I was able to check how many households (which differs from the number of houses) belonged to each *lokasi*.

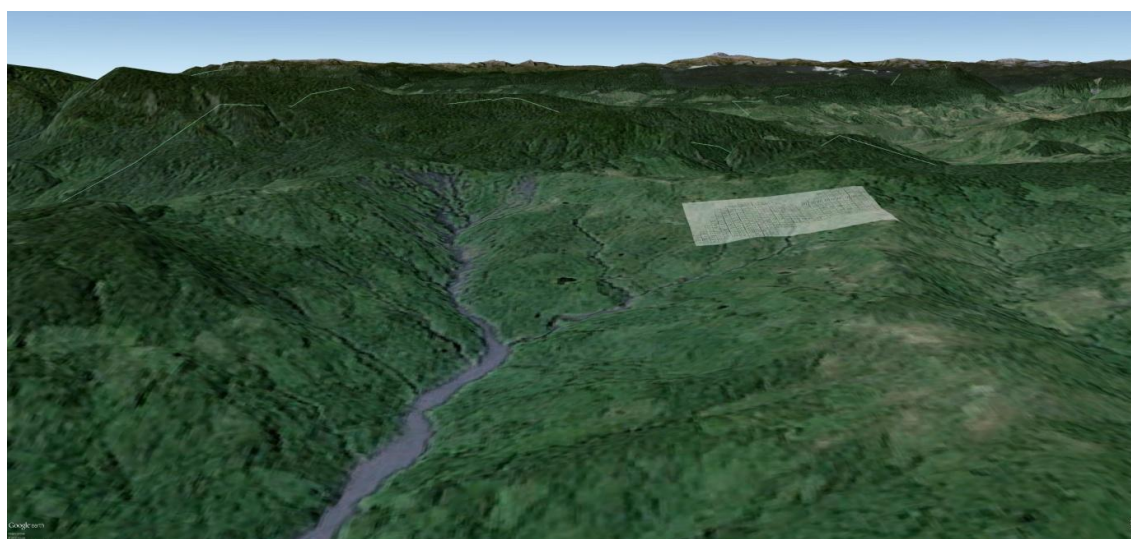
During informal conversations, I sometimes asked people to free list things that children need to learn or do. I also tried to find out information about which schools, if any, children attended and what level of education their parents had completed, though I did not successfully manage to collect all of these data. This was partly because people were sometimes reticent to tell me their educational history if they had not completed their schooling or if their children were not enrolled in school. It was a source of some embarrassment, because having been schooled is a marker of having overcome alleged backwardness and primitiveness (see Chapters Eight and Nine). I also recorded any mention of people associated with the household who had left the area for education or other reasons. I used NVivo software to keep track of all this data, as well as to organise my digitally recorded fieldnotes.

Age approximation of children is necessarily rough. Two Walak friends (one young unmarried female adult and one teenage girl aged approximately 12-13) and I made a list of children in the Ikonium group, dividing them into eight approximate age categories based on my friends' memories of which children were born around the same time, and our joint estimation of children's ages. I supplemented these data with any dates of birth I learned from the few parents who had written down their children's birthdates.

### **Time Allocation Spot Observation Study**

As Gross (1984, 520) says "[Time Allocation] studies are supplementary to other ethnographic approaches and may add new information in unexpected ways." I ran a time allocation (TA) study using the spot observation method between 3rd February and 12th April 2014. To do the study, I divided my map of the geographical area that

the six Ikonium *lokasi* occupied into 314 squares, each of which was approximately fifty metres square. I also divided the daylight hours in a week into ninety-one one-hour intervals and numbered them. I then used an online randomiser (Urbaniak and Plous, 1997-2015) to choose three sets of sixty unique one-hour intervals, and three sets of sixty non-unique numbered map squares.<sup>15</sup> I paired the sets of times with the sets of map squares and allocated each set of pairs to specific dates between 3rd February and 12th April 2014 (although the day of the week and the time of the day was random, the date was not).<sup>16</sup> For the study, I used 150 of these 180 pairs.<sup>17</sup>



***Map visualising the topography and showing the TA study area from the North***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

For each pair, I then went to the allocated map square at the allocated time, and recorded who was in the square and what they were doing in the first moment I observed them, on the basis that, as Bernard (2011, 425-426) says, "if you sample a sufficiently large number of representative acts, you can use the percentage of *times* people are seen doing things...as a proxy for the percentage of *time* they spend in those activities." I stayed in each square for ten minutes, recording any individual who was there when I arrived, and anyone who passed by or turned up in the square during

<sup>15</sup> In other words, each time slot could only be chosen once, whereas each map square could be chosen multiple times.

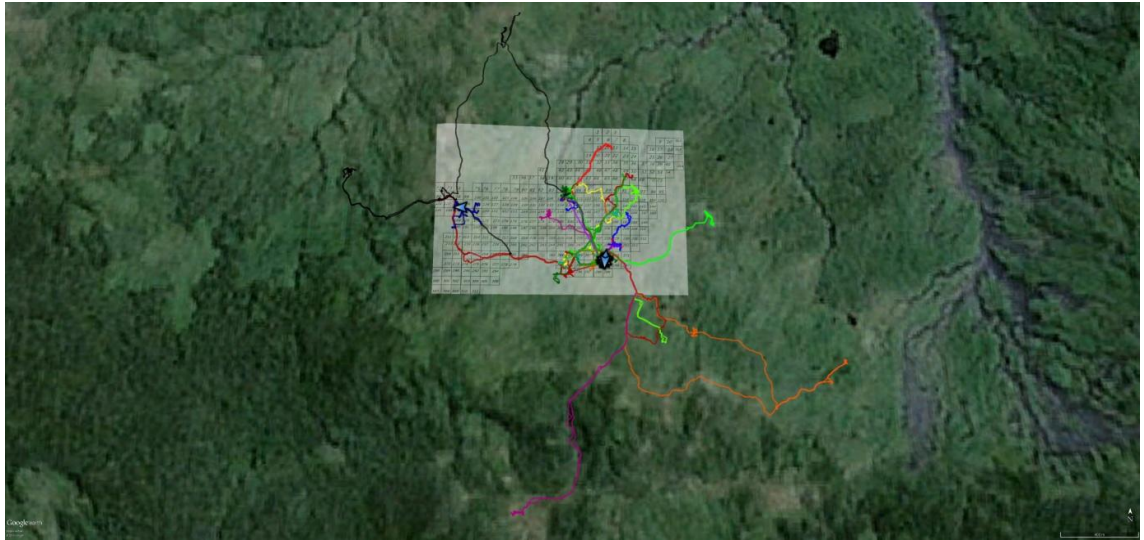
<sup>16</sup> This was necessary to accommodate practicalities such as the need to travel on specific dates and inconveniences such as getting lost in the forest.

<sup>17</sup> I ordered the time slots and then paired the first time slot on my calendar with the first, unordered, randomly allocated map square. The thirty prepared pairs I did not use for the study were the last thirty time slots.

those ten minutes. I then did spot checks on each of the eight squares surrounding the allocated square, recording the same information for any individuals who were within these squares when I arrived. Using this method, I learned to 'eyeball' fifty square metres fairly accurately, but where there was any doubt, I used my GPS device to bound the squares. If an individual was observed two or more times doing different activities during the same time interval, I only recorded the first time I observed them. This was because Walak people do not compartmentalise their activities, so recording more than an initial spot observation of a person's activities made categorisation of people's activities too subjective.

The total area covered was approximately three-quarters of a square kilometre. Having done the study, I am astonished that I covered such a small area, but it was on a slope and the terrain was rough, so it would sometimes take me the best part of an hour to hike between the furthest points within it, despite being fit and well-used to the altitude after fifteen months in the field. Due to the limitations of being the sole researcher undertaking the study, I could not have covered a larger area and still recorded sufficient observations to make the study meaningful (see Appendix Four for more details of the decisions I made in designing this study). Some activities were not recorded because they did not happen in the small area I was able to cover. For example, although many teenagers were recorded travelling to and from school, none were recorded in school, because there was no SMP school within the TA study area. I accounted for this in the analysis by including travel to and from activities in the counts of that activity.

Two of my other methods - the GPS tracking method and the shadow method (see below) - provide evidence that people regularly travelled well beyond the area covered in the TA study within a day. The map below illustrates this by overlaying the TA study area with fourteen tracks recorded by twelve girls who carried my GPS device in their net bags for a day at a time.



***Fourteen tracks by twelve Walak girls aged approximately 1-11 years***

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data

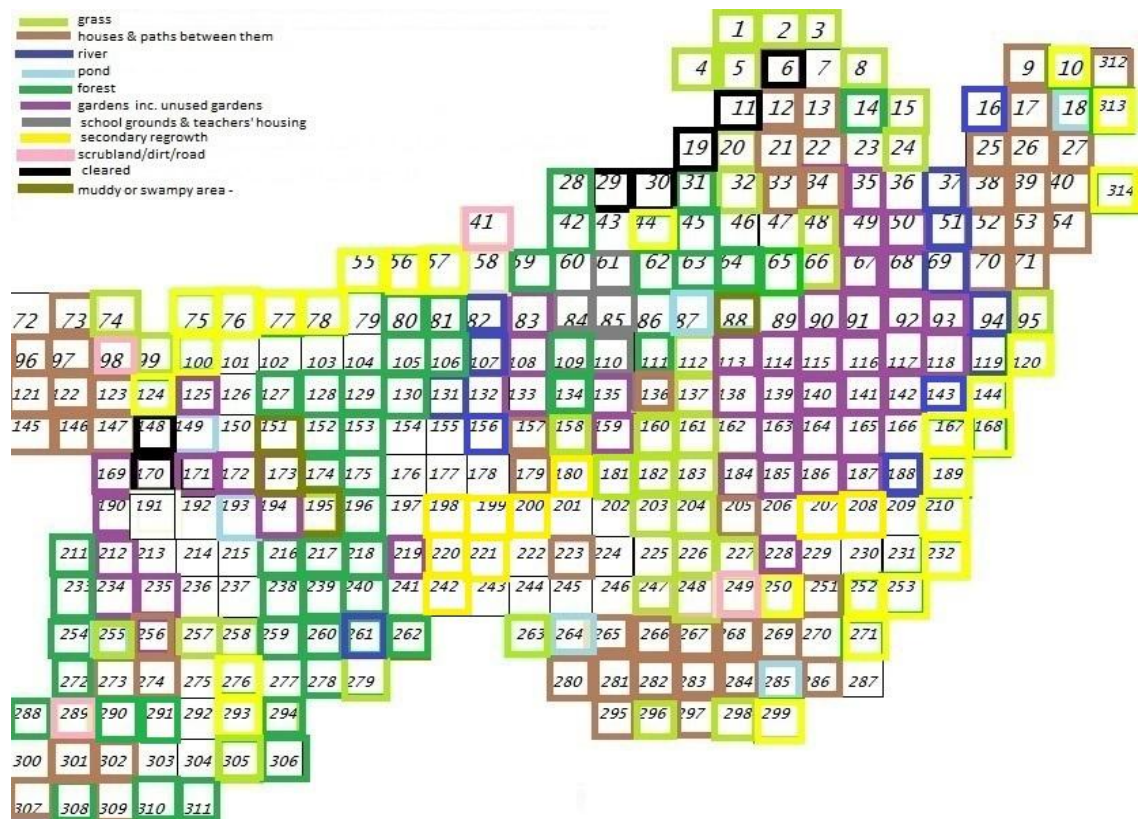
Although I covered a small area, it included Ob Anggen school, the Ikonium church, a large area of gardens, several smaller garden areas, forest, secondary re-growth, grassland, cleared forest (in preparation for making new gardens), scrubland, a few muddy, swampy areas, riversides, and some large ponds (see Appendix Four for further descriptions and pictures of terrain types). The first image on page 89 gives a rough indication of the distribution of these terrain types. This diversity of terrain is typical of the wider area surrounding my observation area, though the proportions of terrain types are not representative of Eragayam Tengah as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

A disadvantage of choosing the individual as a sampling unit (see Appendix Four) was that my own time cost per observation was high. Individuals in Eragayam are often scattered across large areas, undertaking activities alone or with just a few other individuals. This is reflected in the fact that of my 150 observation hours, 103 yielded no observations in the central fifty square metres and forty-two yielded no observations in the whole 150 square metres. The second image on page 89, in which each coloured square represents one observation hour, maps the distribution of the number of observations I made of people over the TA study area.

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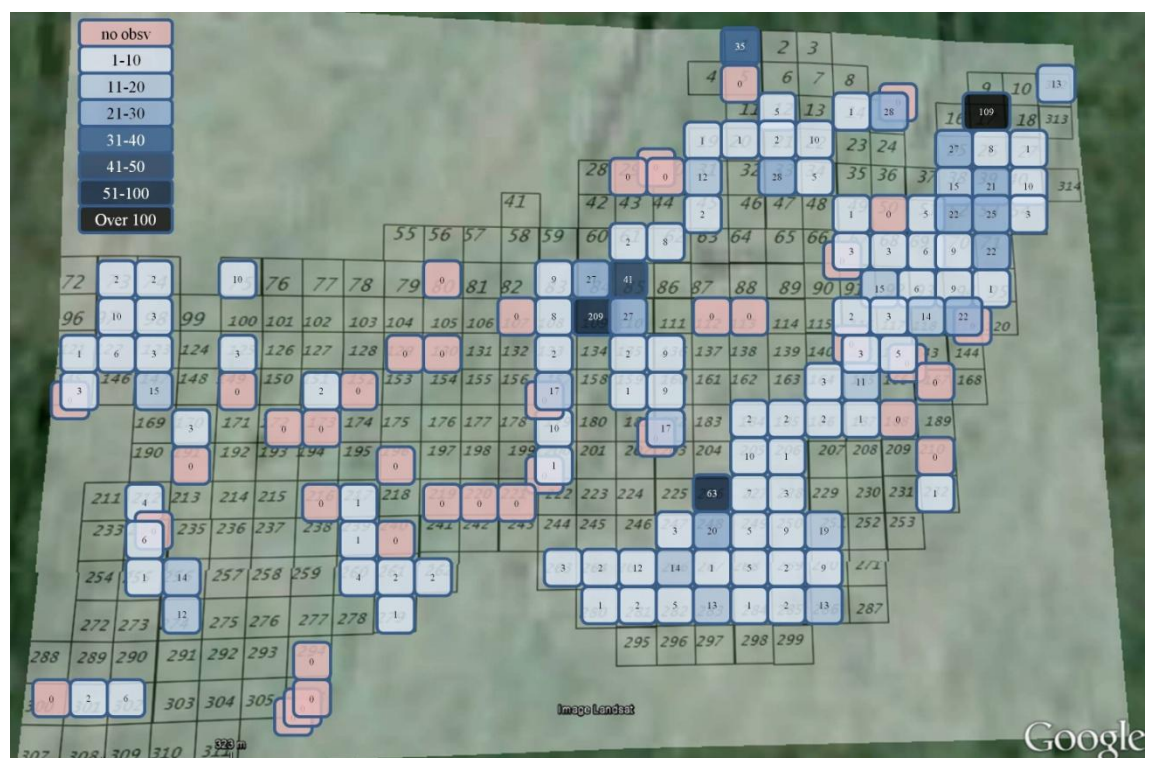
<sup>18</sup> Based on my estimation, if I had covered a wider area, the proportion of residential areas to non-residential areas would have decreased.





**Map Showing Approximate Terrain Type of Time Allocation Study Squares**

Source: a visual approximation made by R. Shah based on fieldwork experience and data



**Number of observations of people per observation hour for each map square**

Background Map: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015), overlaid with my data



In total, I was able to record 1278 observations, of which 1226 were of indigenous people (including people who married Walak people or moved permanently to the area, but excluding non-Walak Ob Anggen staff members) and 531 were observations of children who were approximately six to fifteen years old. Based on Bernard and Killworth (1993), the number of observations needed to see an activity that truly occurs 1% of the time at least once with 95% probability is 299, and to see it at least once with 99% probability is 458, meaning that with 531 observations, it is unlikely that children were engaging in activities that I did not observe in the TA study at all.

I know from fifteen months of fieldwork prior to the start of my time allocation that the study period was not atypical. It was beneficial to do the TA study towards the end of my fieldwork, because while there were misunderstandings about what I was doing (see 'Informed Consent' below) my Walak friends and I had developed enough trust to be able to navigate them in a way that would not have been possible several months earlier. My knowledge of life in Eragayam also helped me code more accurately than I would otherwise have been able to do. For details of the codes I used for analysis see Appendix Three.

### **Spot Observation of YPPGI School**

My husband and I also used the spot observation method to do a study of what activities were happening at the YPPGI school during school hours. According to the *guru honor* (honorary teacher in Indonesian - see Chapter Four) and the pupils, the school was officially open from 8am to noon, Monday through Saturday, so we randomly chose thirty one-hour time slots that fell during these hours in which the school ought to be running. We then turned up unannounced to the school at these randomised times and recorded who was there and what they were doing, without overly disrupting or upsetting their activities. The thirty hours fell on nineteen days, with at least two hours falling on each of the six school days. As with the TA study, the days and times were randomised, but the dates were not. Aaron made twenty of these observations and I made the other ten.

The *guru honor* reluctantly agreed to us making these observations, though one of them in particular sometimes seemed uncomfortable with it, which is not surprising given how infrequently the school was actually open (see Chapter Four). He challenged me on why I was not doing similar observations on the state school. I told him that it was further away and harder to get to for short observations, which he disputed. We also found that the YPPGI school pupils were sometimes nervous of us when we turned up, as many of them were from areas beyond Eragayam Tengah and were not used to my research activities. These children were more reticent to talk to us than children in Eragayam Tengah usually were. We did not push them if they appeared to be uncomfortable talking to us. However, usually at least one child was happy to tell us which classes the children in a group belonged to, and as we made spot observations of the children's activities before we asked them, their unfamiliarity with us did not overly affect the results.

### **Shadow Method**

The shadow method involves following and observing one person at a time. I chose sixteen girls from Ikonium from newborn babies to fifteen years of age to shadow, using age fifteen as the upper limit as this was the approximate age of the eldest children who still attended primary school. I only shadowed girls as it would have been inappropriate for me to shadow older male children, and I chose those girls according to the following criteria. Firstly, I ensured I had two people from each of eight two-year age categories from birth to age fifteen. If these age categories included girls enrolled in Ob Anggen, I chose to shadow one girl who was enrolled in Ob Anggen and one who was not. I then chose according to *lokasi*, so that the number of girls I shadowed from each area was as close to being proportional to the population of female children in that area as possible. Lastly, if there was still a choice of person after all these criteria had been applied, I chose to include as many different households as possible.

Having chosen a girl to follow, I then visited her compound in the morning to ask for permission to spend the day with her and record what she did that day. I started with families I knew better in order to build trust, by example, with those I knew less well. All the girls (and their parents if they were present) gave me

permission at the beginning of the day, but two of them from the older age categories (one aged approximately 10-11, the other approximately 14-15), both of whom I didn't know particularly well before the shadow day, seemed to feel uncomfortable with me accompanying them everywhere as the day progressed. In both cases we attended a funeral together on the observation day, so my attentions were public and perhaps embarrassing. On those two days, I cut my shadowing short; consent and withdrawal of consent is enacted as well as given verbally and I felt that it was not appropriate for me to keep following the girls given their apparent embarrassment or discomfort. In all the other cases, I was able to spend eight or more hours with each of the girls observing and recording what they did that day, who they were with and how they interacted.

One limitation to this method was that my presence undoubtedly altered the girls' behaviour. As far as I could tell my presence did not alter their plans for the day, though if mothers were present there was sometimes a discussion between adult women about whether they should change. For example, one mother suggested that I would not be able to accompany her as far as she was planning to go with her daughters that day, but a friend who knew me well reassured her that I was capable of the distance. At first, the girls were often intrigued by what I was doing, and by my voice recorder which I used to take notes. I used this opportunity to explain further what I was doing, allowing them to play with the voice recorder and listen back to things they or I recorded. I found that after an hour or two they lost interest in me, and usually ended up ignoring me and carrying on with their activities. Recording my audio notes in English helped with this; I think recording them in a language they understood would have made them feel self-conscious. Bringing a net bag I was in the process of making also helped, as it allowed me to sit making observations and talking into my voice recorder whilst doing an activity which is normal among adult women. Seeing me making a net bag pleased both the girls and the adult women as it symbolised my commitment to learn and adopt their ways of life. It also made my presence innocuous as it positioned me as just another adult women engaging in a familiar activity.

Another limitation was that as an adult, it was not always appropriate for me to follow the girls wherever they went. For example, upon arrival at one funeral, the girl I

was shadowing went to play at the back with other children, but I could not follow her without paying my respects, which takes some time. On another occasion the girl I was shadowing had a day of tests at school, and I could not sit in the classroom without being disruptive. I watched through the window or door, making spot checks as appropriate for the period of her tests. Despite these limitations, the shadow method allowed me to get a large amount of rich, nuanced data on how girls spend their time which complemented the data I obtained through the spot observation method and participant observation (see Chapters Six for results).

### **GPS Mobility Tracking**

I tried using my GPS, as mentioned above, to map girls' daily mobility by placing the GPS (wrapped in a tea towel to cushion it and in a zip lock bag to waterproof it) in the net bag of a chosen girl and asking her to bring it back to me at the end of the day. I was able to do this with twelve girls: one aged 0-1, four aged 4-5, four aged 6-7, two aged 8-9 and one aged 10-11. For a number of reasons this method did not work as well as I had hoped. For example, although I gave the girl, and her mother if she was young, ample opportunity to investigate the GPS before wrapping it up, the temptation to unwrap it and press various buttons was sometimes irresistible, particularly when the girls were pressured to do so by adults around them. In one case, a mother ran back to my house with the GPS, panicked that her daughter had broken it (she had not; it was robust). This meant some of the girls were only tracked for a few hours, compromising the data. I was also only able to use the method with families who really trusted me, as people generally did not really understand what the GPS was. This might have been addressed by a public announcement (see 'Informed Consent' below) but by the time I realised my mistake in not making one, it was too late. I also needed the GPS for other methods which limited the number of days I had available to use it for such tracking. Unfortunately, the end result was that I did not collect enough data, nor was it systematic enough, for me to make comparisons between different demographics about mobility. The data do give an interesting initial indication of how far and how fast girls travel in a day.

## Research and Power

### Informed Consent

A question I asked myself frequently during my fieldwork is "How can you inform people, when they don't really understand what you're doing?" (R. Shah, fieldnote, 4th March 2015). I was not the first person to do research in Eragayam Tengah. In fact, while I was there, I met a young Walak lady who had been away at university and had come back to Eragayam Tengah do a few weeks of linguistic research. However, many people did not understand the context of my research and I wrestled with how the principle of "informed consent" applies in a context where being informed requires people to share my concepts of schooling and knowledge production - the very topic that I am researching. One incident during my TA study was particularly interesting in relation to the idea of informed consent.

When I began my TA study, I did not make a public announcement to request permission to use the method. Instead, I considered it covered by the umbrella explanations of my work that I had given in church and school meetings, and the explanations I gave individuals over the course of the study about what I was doing and why. This turned out to be a mistake.

Towards the end of my second set of TA observations, I began to notice a reticence in some of the people I met when I turned up to do my observations. One young man refused consent to have his photo taken, which was unusual. An adult female asked me outright what I was doing, and did not seem to be happy with my response, although she did not challenge me further. I came home and mentioned the changes to Aaron, wondering aloud whether I should back off from the study. Thankfully, the next day Oreb Gombo (the first head teacher of Ob Anggen in Eragaym Tengah, who is himself originally from Eragayam Tengah) came up to the house and asked to speak to me.

Oreb told me that people were concerned about what I was doing, informed, according to him, by their animist (*animisme*) beliefs. He had heard two rumours. Firstly, people were concerned that I was going to the same places again and again, and that I was always writing, whether I was alone in the forest or with people.

Perhaps, it was suggested, I intended to steal spiritual power from the land (*curi alam*). The second rumour, apparently inspired in part by my use of a GPS device, was that I was looking for gold or some other valuable material, that I had perhaps found it, and that I was going to secretly steal it and take it away for my own gain.

When I heard these suspicions, I felt ashamed. Though I had gone to considerable lengths to show a number of friends what the GPS device did, I knew that most of them had no reference point to make sense of it. Although Oreb was embarrassed that people did not realise that one cannot steal gold without a large-scale mining operation, I felt that both rumours made sense, given the cultural and historical context, and given my admittedly suspicious behaviour of turning up in the forest alone, with a strange device, and writing, even when there was no one there to tell or teach me anything. There was another sense in which the rumours chastised me: they displayed a concern that I was taking that which was not mine and using it for personal gain, which, in a sense, was true. That I was "taking" knowledge, not stealing gold or spiritual power, was of little comfort if my friends did not really understand my activities. They were rightly asserting their agency to ensure they were not being taken advantage of and I felt that their concern was legitimate, if misplaced. This heightened my existing anxieties about how "informed" the consent I received actually was. I determined that morning that I would do exactly as Oreb advised me, even if it meant that consent was ultimately withheld and I needed to stop my data collection altogether.

Oreb told me that people needed to understand the purpose (*tujuan*) of what I was doing. I outlined in detail the methods I was using at the time (time allocation, GPS mobility tracking, the shadow method, and the spot check method on YPPGI school) and explained to him the purpose for each of them. He told me that I was wrong not to announce each new method publically and that explaining what I was doing to individuals was insufficient given that people are not fluent enough in Indonesian to understand my explanations, and given that a lot of local people do not really understand what research is anyway. The need for public, communal consent made sense as soon as I heard Oreb tell me what I should have done; I kicked myself for relying on the model of individual consent inappropriately. I had felt that to keep

bringing up my research in public meetings was burdensome and intrusive, but it was actually the best way of keeping people informed about what I was doing.

I apologised profusely, thanked Oreb for his support, and asked him for advice on how to proceed. He told me that he planned to do an announcement about my research at the funeral that was going on at the time. I asked him to apologise on my behalf and we later agreed that I would also attend the funeral and apologise publicly. It was a large funeral and I was nervous as I expected Oreb to make an announcement with everyone paying attention. Instead, he simply stood up at one point and talked to the men, while the women were cooking, talking and even crying. I was sitting with women, so I could not hear what he said. Oreb called me over at one point, and told me to speak. Not knowing what he had already said, I simply apologised. A couple of men were nodding as I spoke; no one seemed upset or even sombre. Oreb then told me that it was resolved, and that I could continue with my research activities.

I was still concerned, as Oreb had said that it was largely women who were talking about the rumours of what I was doing and few women seemed to have been listening to the announcement or to my apology, but I had misjudged the situation. The next day I decided to allow news to spread about the announcement, and to do a shadow day instead of using the GPS. I stopped at a friend's kitchen and asked her if she had heard anything about the announcement about my research. She told me that they had all heard, and that people received (*terima*) what was said. She reassured me that others were saying that they had been wrong to accuse me (she was quick to point out she had never accused me herself), and that it was now fine for me to carry on with my activities. A little later one lady reassured another lady that it was OK for me to accompany her that day, and turning to me, she added "What Oreb said is good and we received it. We know you are not going to steal anything."

### **Indigenous Ethics**

Three and a half weeks after the announcement at the funeral, and just two and a half weeks before the end of my fieldwork, I initiated a conversation in a public meeting about traditional research ethics, including consent. The meeting had been billed as a school parents' meeting, but as usual a large number of adults and children

who were not directly connected to the school also attended. After a half hour presentation of some of the data I had collected so far (which I did in Indonesian, and had one of the Ob Anggen staff translate it into Walak<sup>19</sup>) I asked for permission to take such data back to England and to use it in my PhD,<sup>20</sup> presentations, publications, and reports to Ob Anggen and other ministries.

An adult male responded on behalf of the group. He insisted that I frame the conversation in terms of Walak ethical considerations instead of the more conventional disciplinary and institutional ethical considerations I had raised. Yes, I could take genealogies, photos, videos, maps and other data back to the UK and use them in multiple contexts, and it was up to me whether I chose to use people's names or not, but the condition of this permission was that I "remember" (*tidak bisa lupa yogho...ingat*) the people the research is about who, in his articulation, are "poor people" (*nir orang miskin aghorik*).<sup>21</sup> By positioning Walak people as disadvantaged in comparison to me and those I would present my research findings to, this man was using a typical Walak (and wider Papuan, see Stasch 2015) technique of highlighting my obligations. My ethical commitment, from his perspective, had nothing to do with pseudonyms or consent forms, and everything to do with the extent to which I was willing to participate in the project of promoting egalitarianism in my own practices and in my representations of Walak people.

Walak people had clear ideas about what it meant for me to behave ethically, informed by their values of egalitarianism, reciprocity and autonomy. I was free to get on with my activities, strange though they may be, as long as I did not violate indigenous ethics, but I was also consistently pressured to behave in a way that took account of what Walak people understood my obligations to be, just as Walak children are (see Chapter Six). These obligations included entering into reciprocal relationships and carrying out my activities in a way that benefitted the whole community, not just a

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<sup>19</sup> This was indispensable, but had its problems too. For example, when I said that I would only take data back to the UK with Walak people's permission and that I would follow any rules they set for me, my translator added "but this [taking data back] has no effects..." (*tapi y efek leggo*).

<sup>20</sup> Although many people there would not have understood what a PhD is, it was clear that I would be taking information such as that which I had just presented, back to another country, sharing it with big groups of people and writing it in "a book."

<sup>21</sup> The man was speaking a mixture of Walak and Indonesian, as reflected in these mixed language expressions.



few individuals. I was frequently told what I should and should not be doing and when I was perceived to be acting unethically, people quickly stopped participating in my research activities.

I tried to meet the expectations Walak people had of me, though I was sometimes inept at doing so. We, and all the Ob Anggen staff, were given food and firewood daily which we did not pay for. I never succeeded in keeping track of these gifts and reciprocating individually (or indeed, of even figuring out if I was meant to) but I gave food to friends I visited, cooked extra food at home which we shared with others and shared the coffee, sugar, onions and garlic which we bought in town with our visitors. We bought chickens in town to donate to feasts and brought presents from Wamena, Sentani, Singapore and the UK to give to people who had supported us in particular ways, such as by giving us a pig, or by looking after that pig. I contributed sugar or salt to the households of the girls I spent shadow days with and rice, coffee, sugar or salt to funeral proceedings. When we left, we were owed five pigs as repayment for the theft of one of our piglets. After taking advice from Ob Anggen staff, we asked that these be given to particular people whom we felt indebted to. I did teach a little English informally and Aaron began doing formal English language lessons for schoolchildren, though neither of us were particularly effective. We also provided basic health care to those who asked for it. This grew overwhelming as more and more people approached us for medicines, so we invested time and money in supporting the local church to set up more effective health care provision through previously trained local nurses. Research often begins long-term commitments to people (Hampshire, *et al.*, 2012, Porter, *et al.*, 2012). It was clear in the final public meeting about my research that this was the expectation Walak people had of us. I am still working out what that implies. I do not yet have the funds to visit, but plan to do so to share the results of my research when I can.

### **Decolonising Research**

There is a growing body of literature about decolonising research by academics who identify themselves as indigenous scholars (e.g. Bishop, 1999, Gegeo, 2001, Nakata, 1998, Porsanger, 1994, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Although the highlands of Papua have been subject to research into indigenous peoples' lives, there are fewer

published Papuan voices challenging the power relations within such research than there are in many other Pacific and Melanesian contexts. Nonetheless, the work of indigenous scholars from other parts of the Pacific is relevant to the Papuan situation. Using similar arguments to those applied to critique schooling (see Chapter One), these scholars condemn the ways in which research has perpetuated colonialist attitudes towards indigenous people whilst being accountable to non-indigenous people (Bishop, 1998b, 1999, Nichol, 2011, Porsanger, 1994, Te Awakotuku, 1991, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). They advocate the use of research models that are embedded in institutions and concepts that originate with and are familiar to the researched peoples (Bishop, 1999, Nakata, 1998, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Some people have even suggested that only indigenous researchers should be allowed to conduct research in their own communities. A more widely held view, however, is that there is space for non-indigenous researchers who are willing to participate on indigenous terms (Bishop, 1999, George 1990, cited in Cram, 1992, Porsanger, 1994, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Primarily, decolonising research is about changing the traditional power relationships between researchers and the subjects of research, and about ensuring that the people being researched are key decision makers in every stage of research design from initiation to dissemination (Grenier, 1998, Porsanger, 1994). Before my fieldwork, I spent a lot of time struggling with how best to reconcile my work in a conventional university context with my agreement with many of the critiques made in the decolonising research movement. Bishop (1995, 1998a, 2003, see also Bishop and Glynn, 1999, 55, and the questions which Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, 10, uses to critically interrogate research) sets out questions about power in research in five areas: initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability. Within what Bishop (1999) calls traditional research, power in these five areas is located primarily, and in many cases exclusively, with the researchers and their institutions. Increasingly, more collaborative models of research are being adopted and promoted within anthropology in response to such critiques (Sillitoe, 2012).

Initiation refers to who begins a project and defines the outcomes of it (Nakata, 1998, Te Awakotuku, 1991). As an ESRC-funded postgraduate student in a British

university, it was hard to see how I could carry out research with a Papuan group in which people from that group designed the questions and framed its scope, but I did a pre-fieldwork scoping trip to Papua in the hope that I might meet Papuans who were willing to collaborate with me. On the scoping trip I met the Ob Anggen staff who eventually introduced me to Eragayam Tengah, but at the time no one suggested it as a potential field site, so I eventually planned the research without input from Walak people. After I arrived in Eragayam Tengah, I told people about my research intentions as often as I could, beginning with a public introduction in a church meeting the day after I arrived. I also said that I considered my presence in Eragayam Tengah to be contingent upon Walak people's welcome (Harvey, 2003). Such announcements were accepted without dispute. However, I quickly realised that my new neighbours' understanding of the potential benefits of the research project had less to do with the research itself than with what else I could offer as a foreigner living in Eragayam Tengah, such as teaching English or providing healthcare, for example.

Representation refers to not just how people in a project are represented but also to who represents them, on what basis and on whose authority. Traditional research has presumed to represent people on the basis of only brief encounters (Tuhivai Smith, 1999), from a standpoint which has made contestation difficult for indigenous peoples (Nakata, 1998). I planned to counter some of the power imbalance in my research by using participatory research methods and an ethnographic determinist approach. My research was intentionally set up to be sufficiently flexible that its direction could be shaped by any indigenous people who wanted to join my research team and I intended to regularly check my interpretations by presenting my findings periodically during the fieldwork period. However, as I gained an understanding of Walak people's perceptions of the potential benefits of my research, asking for collaboration in the research began to feel more like an imposition than an ethical imperative. People had little understanding of my research, which would have been necessary for collaboration, and most friends seemed uninterested in getting more involved in the research for its own sake. Ob Anggen staff were incredibly busy, and Oreb Gombo, who was best equipped to help me with my research, was the busiest of all. Walak women and teenagers also had full days, as did Ob Anggen

schoolchildren. Moreover, as mentioned above, I soon noticed a sensitivity to anyone being seen to spend too much time with me, as this could be interpreted as unfairly favouring particular people whereas our presence was expected to benefit the whole community.

Legitimation refers to how the knowledge in a project is validated, which is usually according to Western epistemologies and methodologies, including a value for neutrality and objectivity among the positivists, and explicit subjectivity among the postmodernists, both of which depend on a view of distance between the knower and the known (Bishop, 1998b, Heshusius, 1994). Accountability refers to who retains the right and power to determine what acceptable outcomes of the project are, and to who controls the procedures, evaluations and distributions of knowledge (Bishop, 2003). Accountability has traditionally been to researchers' institutions, funders and academic peers, rather than to the people who are hosts (Bishop, 1999, Porsanger, 1994, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). As I have demonstrated, Walak people did hold me accountable on their own terms. In hindsight, I was sometimes over-sensitive to attending to ethical principles (both indigenous and institutional) in a way that backfired. For example, it was my fear of being an imposition that held me back from having more public meetings about my research, which I now realise would have been beneficial. However, I retained the flexibility I was committed to, so my methods, the focus of my questions and my ethics were very much shaped by Walak people.

Overall, I have concluded that the power relationships in my research mirror the power relationships in schooling I talk about in this thesis. As with schooling, my research was warmly welcomed by Walak people, but they perceived it as an opportunity for achieving their own goals which were different from the research goals I had myself (see Chapters Eight and Nine for a discussion of these dynamics in relation to schooling). Given the way my research plans changed, it would be disingenuous to suggest that my research was collaborative in the ways the decolonising research literature calls for, but it would also be a disservice to Walak people to downplay the impact of their influence on me and my research activities.

## **Children's Voices**

A process similar to the decolonising research movement has occurred within the anthropology of childhood. As I said in Chapter One, early ethnographies of knowledge transmission and processes of socialisation often presented children as passive recipients of adult knowledge. It is now widely recognised that attention to power inequalities are an important part of the study of childhood, and that children are “competent social actors” who create meaning themselves (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin, 2007, Hampshire, *et al.*, 2012, James, 2007, 261, Pinter and Zandian, 2015, Porter, *et al.*, 2012). It follows that power inequalities in the research process are also relevant and anthropologists increasingly argue that children's perspectives should be more prominent in research about their lives (James, 2007, Pinter and Zandian, 2015, Porter, *et al.*, 2012). Some researchers have responded by making children's perspectives the subject of their research, though James (2007) argues that quoting children does not necessarily amount to an authentic representation of them. Other researchers have gone further, treating children as capable of being effective researchers, not just effective research respondents (Hampshire, *et al.*, 2012).

I do believe that children are competent social actors; it would be difficult to view them otherwise in Eragayam Tengah, where the autonomy of even very young children is recognised. My research shows that children play an active role in their own education. However, although children's perspectives form a part of the data I collected, the particular argument I am making is largely about children's observed experiences and about adult perspectives on children's education. It is not necessarily the case that children produce better knowledge about their lives than adults do, but it is important to acknowledge that participatory or collaborative research with children produces different knowledge (Porter, *et al.*, 2012). Such knowledge is not the focus of this research.

## **Anonymity**

In the final meeting about ethics mentioned above, it was agreed that I could use photos and videos of people and that it was up to me how I use names. I suggested that I would probably use names that identify places and churches but not people.

That is what I have done in this thesis.<sup>22</sup> The first names that appear are pseudonyms from a list of Wola first names from Papua New Guinea.<sup>23</sup>

## **Tale Telling: Analysis and Dissemination**

I have used qualitative and quantitative data and analysis to complement each other. My statistical analysis of quantitative data from the TA study and from the spot observation of the YPPGI school provided useful insights into how children and adults spend their time and how much school actually affects children's time and activities. It also helped me to specify much of what I learned tacitly through eighteen months of fieldwork and it raised questions that I used qualitative data to answer, such as what the meaning of "work" is in the Walak context, and how meaningful "time" is as a measure of Walak activities (see Chapters Seven and Eight). The qualitative data, in turn, guided which tests I ran on the quantitative data. Using NVivo to organise my data allowed me to look at thematic patterns that emerged from the qualitative data. Together the qualitative and quantitative data form, I think, a robust set of evidence on which my arguments rest.

My funder required that the final phase of this doctoral research be undertaken in my home UK institution, away from the field. As a result of this requirement, and lack of funds to visit Papua, the process of analysis and writing, through which I have formed my argument, has been done without input from Walak people. As I said in my research proposal, a PhD thesis and academic publication are necessary but not, I believe, sufficient forms of distribution (Grenier, 1998, Porsanger, 1994). I intend to write a report of my findings for Ob Anggen and also hope to visit Eragayam Tengah and explain in person what I have done so far with my findings.

## **Conclusion**

"...we must expect that things will change, during and after research projects in unknowable ways... We should not expect that ethical guidelines drawn up at the start of a project will continue to apply unproblematically;

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<sup>22</sup> As is usual in small scale societies, full anonymisation is not possible, as people will be identifiable to anyone who reads this who knows Eragayam Tengah well. However, people were happy for me to use their names and none of the stories I have shared contain information that is confidential locally.

<sup>23</sup> Kindly provided to me by Paul Sillitoe

instead, we should be prepared to re-visit and re-negotiate these as the often messy realities of people's lives unfold" (Hampshire, *et al.*, 2012, 231).

Although these words were written about doing research collaboratively with children, I believe that they apply to all ethnographic research. Fieldwork is unpredictable because it involves the convergence of the messy realities of both our own lives and those of other people's lives in contexts that we do not control. It is also unpredictable because we do not fully control the research process itself, and nor should we. I held this conviction before I began my fieldwork, because of the influence of Sillitoe's works on ethnographic determinism, numerous indigenous scholars' works on decolonising research, and the literature on participatory research methods. I was able to apply the principles of ethnographic determinism in my work, though living with the tensions inherent in the approach was more challenging than I had anticipated. Although my research did not become truly collaborative Walak people and Ob Anggen staff played a powerful role in producing the anthropological knowledge that this research has resulted in. The methods I used and the ethical guidelines I applied were influenced by my training, by the academic texts I read, and by my supervisors' guidance, but they were also influenced by the relationships I formed in the field and by the values, perspectives and agendas of the Walak people who co-operated in the research. I had to re-visit and re-negotiate my ethical principles, because Walak people had their own ethical principles that they expected me to take account of. I do not believe that the unpredictable nature of research means that as ethnographers we should abandon disciplinary planning, ethical guidelines or structured methods, but we should hold our plans lightly, expect things to need to change and above all we should be highly responsive to the people we are working with

# Chapter Four: Schooling in Context

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In Chapter One, I asserted that one of the strengths of anthropology is an analysis of phenomena in their specific contexts. This is important because education never occurs in isolation: it is shaped by the historical, political and social contexts within which it operates. In this chapter, I describe how schooling came to be introduced to Papuans and show how schooling came to be perceived as an institution which would benefit Papuans and which all Papuan children should have access to. I also shows that the nature of those benefits, both to foreign powers and to indigenous people, was differently constructed, by different stakeholders, at different points in history. I then describe state schooling as it currently operates in Papua, and give an overview of the private schooling landscape within which Ob Anggen sits. Currently schooling across Papua is failing to translate to the benefits which international development agencies associate with school attendance. Their reports attribute this to the fact that schooling is not running as it should. In Eragayam District, and in Eragayam Tengah itself, the failings reported for Papua Province are evident to an even greater extent than they are in the regions more commonly reported on, as I demonstrate with Indonesian government census data and my own spot observation data. It is this situation which Ob Anggen, which I introduce in the next chapter, is seeking to address.

## **History of Education in Papua**

Outlining the history of education in Papua is a difficult task for a European because prior to the sixteenth century Europeans knew next-to-nothing about the existence of the island of New Guinea (as it came to be known<sup>24</sup>), let alone its educational history. By piecing together evidence from oral histories and from early records such as the reports and diaries of explorers, traders, naturalists and, eventually, missionaries and colonisers, a rough picture of the important periods of

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<sup>24</sup> Discussions on the origins and significance of the names "Papua" and "New Guinea" can be found in Gelpke (1993), Ploeg (2002), McCallum (2004), Singh (2008) and MacLeod (2015).



educational history that happened prior to European contact with New Guineans can be formed, but this picture is inevitably limited in accuracy and in the perspectives it represents. It is nonetheless useful as it serves to situate the educational opportunities available to Walak children outside of schooling in their historical context, which predates European knowledge of the region.

### **Pre-European History**

Few generalisations can be made about children's education in Papua in the centuries prior to European influence, partly because of the sparse evidence available and partly because Papua, then as now, hosted a diversity of practices and histories. However, one of the few generalisations that does seem to be well-evidenced is that in the period immediately preceding European contact, children's learning happened outside of schools or any such institutions (Thomas, 1993, Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). This does not mean that there was no formal education; in some places children were formally educated through initiation rites for instance (Thomas, 1993, Weeks and Guthrie, 1984), but much of children's education was embedded in everyday life. Children learned through observation, participation and intentional instruction, though the degree to which intentional instruction occurred varied.

According to Miklouho-Maclay (1975), the New Guineans he knew (who lived on the northwest coast of the island in what is now the Rai coast) liked to instruct others, and trained their children young. The children, he claimed, did not play much. Ahui Ova (1975 [1939]) recorded memories of his childhood in Hanuabada, including of his father instructing and teaching him, his parents taking him hunting and his maternal uncle helping him kill a wallaby. Maloat (1975 [1954], 24) remembers learning through observation and participating in a feast on Baluan Island, and highlights his own agency in the process of learning: "All of us children were schooled in this custom [of dancing at a feast as a display of wealth]. Some learned and some didn't. I didn't learn. Why? Because I knew it was no good. I tried it once..." Both of these oral histories were given to foreigners long after European contact with New Guinea, but they serve as examples of the kinds of learning that happened before schools.

## Missionaries and Schooling

Contrary to the rhetoric of isolation often used to describe the highlands of New Guinea, Europeans were far from the first foreigners to trade and interact with the various peoples of New Guinea (Braithwaite, *et al.*, 2010, Gaffney, *et al.*, 2015, Parsonson, 1968, Riesenber, 1965, Vaez de Torres, 1975 [1607], Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). However, if any of these early settlers, traders or explorers introduced New Guineans to literacy or schooling, their influence was ill-recorded by Europeans and was not sustained. Portuguese and Spanish explorers of the early sixteenth century were the first Europeans to sight New Guinea, but it was the Dutch, who arrived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, who became the biggest European colonial influence on the western half of New Guinea (Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). The Dutch war ships were superior to the Portuguese and Spanish vessels and the Dutch made their interest in New Guinea clear by signing a treaty which recognised the Moluccan Sultan of Tidore's claim to the Northwest of New Guinea, where he had collected taxes as a colonial power for centuries (Braithwaite, *et al.*, 2010). Later, in 1828, the Dutch made a formal claim to the western half of New Guinea themselves, and in 1875 they officially declared an interior boundary in New Guinea which ran as a straight line from 140° 47' E in the north to the 141st Meridian in the south in 1875 (van der Kolff, *et al.*, 1950). The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were times of European whalers, sealers, traders, labour recruiters, prospectors, explorers, shipwreck survivors and surveyors making increasingly sustained contact with New Guineans on the mainland, but it was not until the nineteenth century, when missionary organisations attempted to form bases along newly established shipping routes between Australia, China and India, that Europeans began introducing schooling to Papuans.

Between 1847 and 1886 the Marists, the London Mission Society, Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the Lutheran mission and the Sacred Heart all attempted to establish mission bases on the eastern side of New Guinea, in what is now Papua New Guinea, as this is where there were established sea routes. All of these but the Marists started schools as part of their mission efforts (Biskup, *et al.*, 1967, Brown, 1975 [1877], Epalle, 1975 [1843], Macfarlane, 1975 [1871], Whittaker, *et*

*al.*, 1975).<sup>25</sup> In the west of New Guinea, the German Lutherans Johann G. Geissler and Carl W. Ottow arrived on Mansinam in 1855, having received the permission of both the Sultan of Tidore and the Dutch government to commence their mission work (Hummel, 2012, Ottow and Geissler, 1857). Geissler and Ottow opened a school for boys in 1857 and Ottow's wife Auguste opened one for girls the year after (Hummel, 2012). Alfred R. Wallace who spent three months in Dorei in 1858 mentioned their presence and also alluded to Dutch missionaries in the region (Wallace, 1860). When d'Albertis arrived to Mansinam, opposite Dorei, in 1880 he found a Dutch missionary who had been established there for nine years. This missionary had a church which also served as a school where he taught children religion, reading and writing, which by d'Albertis' (1880, 71) estimation they were "by no means quick at learning." D'Albertis also visited the mission station at Andai where another school was established; here his report was that "they pray and study a good deal, but it appears they learn very little. They read well from the board in the school, but they do not recognize the letters of the alphabet if they see them elsewhere. The missionary confessed that they profited but little by his endeavours" (d'Albertis, 1880, 73-74). The Utrecht Mission Society also sent missionaries to the mission base in Mansinam in 1863 (Hummel, 2012, Ipenburg, 2008) and set up at Geelvink Bay in 1885 (Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). By 1890, there were 60 students enrolled in the mission school in Mansinam (Ipenburg, 2008, 352).

The missionaries who introduced schooling to western New Guineans were Germans Lutherans and Dutch Calvinists. This is relevant because their philosophy of education was rooted in the European Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformers advocated education for all, which was a radical policy at the time, founded in part on their conviction that Christians should be able to read the Bible for themselves rather than be dictated to by the church. The reformers argued for Bible translations and schooling in the vernacular, and for instruction in subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and training for civil service as well as in religion and training for ecclesiastical service (Keyes, 1991). During the Protestant Reformation, education even began to be seen as "a means to personal salvation"

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<sup>25</sup> The Marists valued Christian education but they suffered many deaths and as a consequence their mission collapsed just eight years after its commencement.

(Cubberley, 1920a, 336). The influence of these tenets can be seen in the German and Dutch Protestants' integration of schooling into their missions from the start. For them, schooling was a means of coming to (or strengthening) a personal, saving faith as well as a means of preparing to be a moral, contributing member of society. This understanding of schooling's purposes shaped the missionaries' decisions to provide schooling in the vernacular, to promote schooling for all children of both genders, and to integrate the teaching of religion with the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic.

### **Dutch Colonisation**

Close behind missionaries came other permanent European settlers (Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). Interest in New Guinea had grown, both for scientists such as Wallace (1860), Miklouho-Maclay (1975), Beccari, Finsch (see Biskup, *et al.*, 1967) and d'Alberty (1880), and for colonialists. In 1898 two permanent settlements were set up to establish Dutch administration of the western half of New Guinea. A third was added in 1902 (Ipenburg, 2008, Whittaker, *et al.*, 1975). This did not immediately have much effect on the Papuan population, as the Dutch administration still relied on missionaries to provide schooling (Ipenburg, 2008) and few Europeans had yet penetrated the interior of the mainland.

In the first half of the twentieth century, missionaries grew in influence and expanded their system of schools in western New Guinea (Ipenburg, 2008). Some villages even asked missionaries to send teachers and evangelists to them (Hummel, 2012) and the number of schools grew rapidly. In 1924 there were 71 Utrecht Mission Society primary village schools with a three year programme. By 1934 this had increased to 157 and by 1942 there were 300 (Ipenburg, 2008, 354). Schools were started immediately when missions entered new areas. In the 1930s missionaries also reached the highlands (Ipenburg, 2008). Protestant work was started in the Western Highlands by an American and his Dayak assistants under the auspices of The Christian and Missionary Alliance; they began work with the Dani in the 1950s (Hummel, 2012).

From 1938, when about 4% of the registered population in Netherlands New Guinea attended school (van der Kolff, *et al.*, 1950), a three year *beschavingsschool* or

so-called "civilisation school" was used in Papua (Ipenburg, 2008). Subjects included music, sports, gardening and basket weaving as well as reading, writing and arithmetic (Ipenburg, 2008) and aimed at "imparting a sense of order and discipline" (Foundation New Guinea Institute, 1958, 48). In 1942, Japan occupied some parts of Netherlands New Guinea and in at least some of these areas education was stopped and mission teachers and their charges were forced to produce food for the army (Penders, 2002). After the war, missionaries returned to providing education and the Dutch administration also began to invest more intentionally in education, especially after 1949, when Papua was kept out of the Indonesian Republic at a Round Table Conference (Ipenburg, 2008). In 1950 the Secretariat of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union reported that, in large part due to the activities of missionaries, by the end of 1949 there were 531 schools in Netherlands New Guinea attended by 25,883 pupils, making up about 10% of the registered population (van der Kolff, *et al.*, 1950, 16-17).

The educational focus of the Dutch in the 1950s was to use schooling to prepare Papuans for self-governance (Ipenburg, 2008, Mollet, 2007, Timmer, 2005) and to this end, as well as to better serve both foreigners and Papuans living in urban areas, they provided schooling in two tiers: "indigenous education," which included various forms of village-based primary education, and "Western-styled education," which was more similar to the type of education available in the Netherlands (Foundation New Guinea Institute, 1958, 48-53).<sup>26</sup> The purpose of education overall was cited in the 1960 and 1961 annual reports on Netherlands New Guinea as "in the first place the giving of basic education for the spiritual and social development of the population; in the second place the training of a sufficient number of officials to fill appointments with the Government and private enterprise and of other persons who can direct social and cultural development" (Ministry of Affairs Overseas and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1960, 89, Ministry of Affairs Overseas and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961, 89). As these reports show, the purpose of education according to the Dutch administration was founded on the same principles as those that the missionaries held, but the emphasis had shifted from providing access to schooling as widely as possible and from the use of schooling for spiritual and social development

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<sup>26</sup> Despite their use of the term "indigenous education" both these types of education were foreign and modelled on schooling.

to its use as a means to prepare a "sufficient number" of Papuans to fill elite leadership positions. Thus, students who successfully completed seven years of primary school could continue on to a *Vervolgschool* (VVS) which provided a basic secondary education, and from this pool of schooled Papuans, students were selected to become civil servants or to represent the region at international conferences (Ipenburg, 2008). The annual reports also acknowledge unsubsidised education, including "small mission schools" which "are important for the propagation of Christianity" and in the early stages focused simply on "accustoming the children to some measure of discipline and regularity" (Ministry of Affairs Overseas and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961, 90). The number of government and subsidised primary schools at the end of 1961 was 760 and the number of unsubsidised schools was 509 (Ministry of Affairs Overseas and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961).

### **Indonesia's Influence**

In 1962, the New York Agreement transferred administration of Netherlands New Guinea from the Dutch government to the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA, see Chapter Two). UNTEA administration lasted only seven short months, during which time part of its role from the United Nations perspective was "to reorient the entire service, substituting the Indonesian language and procedures for those of the Dutch so that there would be no upheaval when UNTEA handed over the reins of government to the Republic of Indonesia" (United Nations, 2016e). Boray (2012) states that, in fact, existing civil servants remained in post and that there was little change in the administration of education, which continued to be delivered by the Protestant and Catholic missions until 1963 when administration was transferred to Indonesia. At this point Netherlands New Guinea, which had increasingly been called West New Guinea, had its name changed to Irian Barat (or West Irian in English, United Nations, 2016e).

A speech given at the opening of Tjenderawasih University (now Cenderawasih University) in 1962 talks about the importance of education that has its roots in "Indonesian culture" and positions West Irian as liberated by Indonesia from the colonising influences of the Dutch, in education as in other arenas (Poerbakawatja, 1962, 6). After General Suharto took control of the Indonesian army in 1965 and then

officially became president of Indonesia in 1967, a homogenising, top-down, authoritarian approach to education was taken across Indonesia as part of the attempts by Suharto's New Order regime to "inculcate a sense of a single Indonesian nation" (Bertrand, 2007, 21, see also Wulandari and Soesman, 2010, 13). Nowhere was this more severe than West Irian (renamed once again to Irian Jaya in 1973), where the Indonesian national curriculum was imposed, Indonesian became the language of instruction, and no other cultural expression or local content was allowed in schooling (Ajamiseba, 1987, Bertrand, 2007). A 1969 report from Jakarta outlines some of the early changes for the system of education in West Irian designed to make it correspond more closely with the rest of Indonesia. These changes included the introduction of six years of primary school or *Sekolah Dasar* (SD) in line with the Indonesian education system (Departemen Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia, 1969).

The education system was rapidly expanded in the decades of Suharto's New Order regime (Greiwe, 1973) but schools remained mostly inaccessible to people in rural areas (Mollet 2007). Ajamiseba's (1987) assessment of primary education in Irian Jaya cites an inappropriate curriculum, language barriers, a shortage of teachers, government regulations which made it difficult for even private schools to adapt curriculum to the local context, difficulties of access and parental attitudes (which he represented as being either too optimistic or too pessimistic about schooling's potential) as just some of the many challenges leading to educational failure in Irian Jaya at the time. His scathing but reportedly widely accepted appraisal was that:

Since the content and rationale of primary education is drawn from other parts of Indonesia, the major emphasis is on providing candidates for secondary and higher education and on catering to the presumed needs of public service. It is geared towards students becoming teachers or officials; it reinforces the idea that education is for the select few who will get outside jobs. However, the majority of students drop out, fail the final examinations or simply can not [sic] go on to secondary schools for various reasons. Their primary education is not geared in terms of contributing to the development of their community. ...What the students learn in school, i.e. reading, writing, arithmetic/mathematics, geography, history etc. doesn't seem to have anything in common with the daily living reality in the village. This shows that there is no concern for the indigenous local culture and society in the education program. Too much attention is given to schools with little or no concern for the whole man - the whole society in relation to social, economic and cultural development. (Ajamiseba, 1987, 4)

Private schools continued to operate during the New Order regime, but they were subject to centralising government regulations (Ajamiseba, 1987). Some missionaries also started re-evaluating their philosophy of schooling and approach to it (see the articles by Adrian, 1973, Greiwe, 1973, Sowanda, 1973, Spicer, 1972 in Bulletin of West Irian Development). Some felt concern about the negative effects schooling had on schooled individuals, who too often found themselves frustrated by the lack of benefits expected from schooling (Sowanda, 1973). Others wrestled with the challenge of how to equip Papuans to participate in the wider world without destroying their cultures and kinship ties in the process (Duijnstee, 1972, Spicer, 1972). Towards the end of the New Order regime, a policy of compulsory basic education was introduced, though Irian Jaya was not yet equipped to implement it (Republic of Indonesia, *et al.*, 2010).

### **The End of the New Order and Special Autonomy**

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, changes were made to the Indonesian Constitution and new laws were passed in order to democratise Indonesia. These changes allowed for decentralisation as a way of better accommodating regional diversity and of appeasing calls for greater regional autonomy, or, in some cases, independence (Bertrand, 2007). Bertrand (2007) rightly recognises the changes that were made to the balance of power between central government in Jakarta and Indonesia's many diverse and far-flung regions as revolutionary against the backdrop of fifty-three years of strong integrationist and centralising strategies. In 2001, when Papua received the Special Autonomy Law, responsibility for schooling at all levels was handed over to the Papuan provincial government, with the national government stipulating only the general policy, core curriculum, and quality standard guidance (Special Autonomy, 2001). According to the Special Autonomy Law (Special Autonomy, 2001, Article 36, Clause 2), at least 30% of the provinces' allocation of profits from natural resources should go towards education, designated as one of four priority areas of development by the Papuan provincial government in the 2000s (UNDP 2005).

However, as Bertrand (2007) argues, there are a number of reasons to doubt the effectiveness of Special Autonomy in Papua. Firstly, the law itself is ambiguous in ways that weaken it. Secondly, the Special Autonomy Law is set up in such a way that



the Indonesian Constitution could undermine it. Thirdly, implementation of its provisions has been largely ineffective (Timmer, 2005). Fourthly, Indonesian has historically favoured unity over diversity and the empowerment of the central government over the autonomy of regional governments, and has yet to shed these tendencies. Thus, although state education arguably has access to ample resources to fund schooling, and despite the fact that many school buildings have been built in rural areas and many indigenous Papuans have become teachers, the state education provision has improved little in the fifteen years since the implementation of Special Autonomy.

## **The Current State of Schooling in Papua Province**

### **State Schooling in Papua Province**

State schooling in Papua Province continues to be based on the Indonesian system of education, with six years of primary schooling (*Sekolah Dasar* or SD), three years of junior secondary schooling (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama* or SMP) and three years of senior secondary schooling (*Sekolah Menengah Atas* or SMA). There is also access to tertiary education in many urban areas. The provision available remains insufficient to meet the national standard of all citizens attending school for the first nine years, but this inadequacy is one of the least cited of Papua's many educational challenges, as even the schools that do exist are largely not meeting their stated aims. Indeed Ajamiseba's (1987) assessment of primary schooling in Irian Jaya in the 1980s under the New Order regime makes for sobering reading today as so many of the allegations of failure that he made remain applicable despite the policy changes and investment made over the last three decades.

Many international organisations and agencies have supported Indonesia in improving state schooling in Papua. Papua reports a high per capita spending on education as a result of income from Special Autonomy funds (ACDP, 2014, Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009) and considerable support has also been donated from the governments of Australia (Fargher and Cislowski, 2012), the Netherlands (Unit for Acceleration of Development in the Provinces of Papua and West Papua, 2012) and the United States (International Relief and Development, 2013,

USAID, 2009, 2011). Furthermore, multiple United Nations agencies including UNICEF (Baker, 2016b, Grainger, 2014, Klaus, 2013), the ILO (International Labour Organisation, 2016a, c) and the UNDP (Nations, 2016, UNDP, 2016), as well as the World Bank (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, World Bank, 2009, 2015) have delivered programmes and evaluation in support of Indonesia's educational development goals in Papua. Countless faith-based organisations also continue to invest in primary education in Papua, while others such as Justitia et Pax (Justitia et Pax, 2010) and members of the Faith-based Network on West Papua (Wulandari and Soesman, 2010) report on Papua's progress or lack therefore in providing universal access to primary schooling. Annex Twelve of a report made for the Faith-based Network on West Papua (Wulandari and Soesman, 2010, 82-88) listed nineteen foreign-funded programmes offering donor support in the education sector to Papua Province in 2010.

Although some improvements are acknowledged as a result of all this outlay, reports from these organisations, as well as from academics (see especially Mollet, 2007, Munro, 2009, 2013), reporters (such as Anderson, 2012, 2013a, Rantetana, 2011), missionaries, expatriate and Indonesian educators, and Papuan families (through personal communication) are unanimous about widespread systemic failure in state schooling which disproportionately disadvantages Papua in general, and the rural parts of Papua Province in particular. It is difficult to give accurate reports on exactly what the schooling situation is as the physical landscape makes it expensive to collect reliable data and the diversity of cultural and linguistic contexts makes it challenging to collect meaningful data. The reports that do emerge give differing statistics and often report each other's data rather than collecting their own. The Education Sector Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership (ACDP, 2014, 7)<sup>27</sup> report starts its analysis of the situation with the frustrated claim that "perhaps the most serious problem in the education sector that needs to be addressed is that of the paucity of accurate and reliable data." In-depth anthropological research fills this gap to some extent as it provides reliable data on schooling interpreted in contextually meaningful ways, but it is not able to provide such data on the province as a whole,

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<sup>27</sup> ACDP is a partnership established between the Indonesian Government, the Australian Government, through Australian Aid, the European Union and the Asia Development Bank.

and the province-wide research that has been done seems to be too generalised to hold true across all the regencies and districts. Nonetheless, although specific statistics must be treated with caution and should be understood to be indicative rather than conclusive, there is a consistency between both in-depth and province-wide research that makes a review of the available evidence worthwhile.

According to the Indonesian government's census from 2010, 38.38% of the population over the age of five in Papua province have never attended school and 37.32% of the population over the age of five are illiterate (BPS, 2010d, e). The census acknowledges that the distribution is uneven and for rural Papua these rates rise to 49.86% for non-attendance at school and 48.48% for illiteracy (BPS, 2010d, e). One UNICEF article suggests that in some highland areas the illiteracy rate may actually be as high as 92% (Baker, 2016a). Even the more modest of these rates represent by far the highest rates of non-attendance at school and illiteracy of any Indonesian province (BPS, 2010d, e). Girls have also consistently made up a lower proportion of the school population in analyses of Papuan schooling over the last decade (ACDP, 2014, BPS, 2013, Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, USAID, 2009).

One reason for low school attendance rates is simply a lack of accessible schools (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, Justitia et Pax, 2010, UNDP, 2005, USAID, 2009, World Bank, 2009). According to a World Bank report, 13% of households in Papua have no primary school within six kilometres of their home (Wai-Poi, *et al.*, 2015). My own visits to several remote areas of Papua in 2011 illustrated the problems of access vividly (see also Anderson, 2013a). Two of the communities I visited - one in the Korowai speaking lowlands and the other in the Moi speaking highlands - had no access to a school building, let alone to trained and qualified teachers.<sup>28</sup> More commonly though, school buildings are present in rural areas but teachers are not.

Teacher absenteeism is one of the most commonly cited problems facing rural Papua; teachers employed to run rural schools often live in urban centres instead of the remote locations of their posts. Reasons for this given by government and international development reports include difficulty in recruiting teachers to rural

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<sup>28</sup> At the time of writing, a private mission-run school is in the process of being set up in this Moi speaking area.

posts, poor infrastructure, lack of support and resources for teachers in rural posts, and lack of monitoring - salaries often continue to be paid to teachers regardless of whether they are in post or not (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, UNDP, 2005, USAID, 2009, World Bank, 2009). A joint agency study in 2011 (UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012) found that rates of teacher absenteeism in Papua Province were at least 37%, and possibly higher, across the province. It also found that they were worse in more isolated areas and worse in the highlands, where one in two teachers were found to be absent at the time of the study and one in four teachers were found to be absent for prolonged periods. It found a number of characteristics that correlated with absenteeism, including that male teachers were more likely to be absent and that PNS teachers (teachers who are civil servants with permanent posts and salaries) were more likely to be absent than contract or volunteer teachers and *guru honor* - untrained teachers who are paid small honorariums. The study also found that monitoring made a difference and that effectively applied School Based Management (SBM) lowered rates of teacher absenteeism, but that few schools in Papua Province used SBM effectively and "only a small number of schools have ever delayed teacher payment or fired teachers" (UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012, 14).

Another commonly reported problem is a low level of training and support for teachers, who have often had poor access to schooling themselves (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, Republic of Indonesia, *et al.*, 2010, USAID, 2009). One UNICEF article claims that some teachers do not even have good literacy and numeracy skills themselves (Grainger, 2014). The schools in rural areas usually have poor quality resources and equipment too (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, Indrawati Sari, *et al.*, 2011, USAID, 2009, Wai-Poi, *et al.*, 2015) and as better teachers generally prefer to work in urban areas, more poorly trained teachers end up in village schools (UNDP, 2005). Many of the rural SD schools are run entirely by *guru honor* (Fargher and Cislowski, 2012, Shah, 2015). Teacher-assisted cheating is sometimes the only way that teachers can ensure students pass their examinations - a result that parents who have paid for their children to take examinations expect (Anderson, 2013a, Shah, 2015, Wulandari and Soesman, 2010). The resulting certificates are considered the all-important output of schooling and are later required for students to apply for posts in

local government, run for political office or otherwise avail themselves of the resources and positions to which schooling is expected to provide access (see Chapter 8 and Munro, 2009, 2013).

A prevalent charge made over the last decade about the schools that do operate is that those in remote regions do not "conserve the traditional wisdom and genuine identity of the Papuan people" as one draft for a Provincial Special Regulation Concerning Education states that they should (Draft Perdasi, 2002, Article 35, Clause 7). The Papuan administration has set out to reverse this over the last 10 years, but in reality little adaption has been made to the national curriculum and pedagogy. The teaching system still emphasises rote learning, memorisation and copying from the board (UNICEF Indonesia, 2009) and teachers themselves operate as authoritarian figures in a hierarchical model imported from western Indonesia and inappropriate to the egalitarian context of the rural Papuan highlands where autonomy and equality are highly valued (see Chapters 2, 6, 8 and 9). The national curriculum is not adjusted to account for local contexts (Government of Papua Province, *et al.*, 2009, Indrawati Sari, *et al.*, 2011, Mollet, 2007, Republic of Indonesia, *et al.*, 2010, UNDP, 2005, USAID, 2009) except in a few rare cases where a contextualised curriculum has been developed and is being used (SERASI, 2012, Wulandari and Soesman, 2010). Consequently, in many ways the education system is still centralised (Timmer, 2005). The curriculum does not incorporate knowledge or content related either to life in the highlands or to job opportunities in the cash economy (Mollet, 2007) and even those who attain a school certificate may not be able to benefit from it (Munro, 2009, 2013, Timmer, 2005, USAID, 2009).

According to Benjamin Wisley, the director of Ob Anggen school (see Chapter Five) these are "little problems" compared to the fact that for many students, "by the time they graduate from SMA, their identity is broken." Several of the Ob Anggen staff attest to this from their own experiences of schooling in Papua Province (Wisley, 2015a). One of the Ob Anggen staff members speaks in an Ob Anggen promotion video about it: "Since I was small, school wrecked my identity. It disparaged me, via my teachers in SD, SMP, SMA, to the point that I was called 'pig, animal,' to the point that I was hit, to the point that my status was destroyed, and now I don't have confidence,

though starting now I am in the process of building my confidence" (Wisley, 2015a, translated by me from the local Indonesian).<sup>29</sup>

Two other Ob Anggen teachers shared similar experiences of schooling during an informal interview (conducted in English) with Aaron. One told him that in a mathematics class, the teacher asked him to spread out his hands and hit him with a metre ruler. He showed Aaron the scar where his hand had bled, telling him,

"They used to call the kids '*anjing*' (dog) or '*babi*' (pig). This then shaped my thoughts and I used to think 'I'm really stupid. I'm nothing. Papuans are like this, really stupid, not like the Java kids.' If we didn't do the homework, I'd have to find firewood or eggs or logs. Then I'd give it to the teacher and get a good mark and they'd say 'You are good.'"

"That's not because of the grade," the other teacher chimed in, "but because of the things you gave [the teacher]."

He added his own experience, saying,

"There was one week where I didn't go to school. The teacher was at school but I didn't know that. The teacher was waiting and counted [that I was away] seven days so he hit me seven times with rope. He [also] cut some wood and dried it so that it didn't break. He hit me from head to feet from behind. It was my friends that said [that the teacher] wasn't at school, and that maybe he was in Wamena. So we didn't go, but actually he was [at school]."

"..Every week the kids brought firewood and greens for the teacher's own house.....they made a schedule and told the kids to bring things. If we got hit, the parents would go and speak to them and ask why, but the teachers [would] say 'This is the school house so they can't say [anything about it].'"

The first teacher added,

"In elementary school [SD], each kid brought a pig [for the teacher], otherwise they didn't get a certificate. [This happened] every year, even though they get a salary from the government and school fees. ...If they like one child, they'll put their name on the list for *beasiswa* [a scholarship]."

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<sup>29</sup> Original: *Sejak saya kecil itu sekolah sudah hancurkan saya punya identitas. Itu menjelekan saya dari saya punya guru SD, SMP, SMA, sampai bilang saya, "babi, binatang," sampai dipukul, sampai menghancurkan saya punya status dan saya sekarang sudah tidak ada rasa percaya diri tapi mulai dari sekarang, sedang bangun saya punya kepercayaan.*

Government schooling is supposed to be free at the point of delivery so the fact that these teachers were receiving an income from school fees as well as a salary from the government shows the extent to which teachers are able to shape the school system to their own ends. Often parents submit to teachers' demands because they have no other way of ensuring their children get school certificates, but sometimes the teachers go too far, as in the following case described by one of the Ob Anggen teachers:

"The Head of the Village had two sons at the school. His son didn't go [to school] so [the teacher] hit him. The rope split and [cut] inside of his skin. The Head of the Village went to hit the teacher but he wasn't satisfied so he went to get a hammer, but the teacher ran and hid. The Head of the Village and his sons ran to find him. [The teacher's] uncles hid him and said he wasn't there."

Both teachers in the conversation with Aaron pointed out that though they went to different schools, they had similar experiences, because the problems with state schooling are systemic. When asked how he felt about these experiences now, one of the teachers responded that that was just how schooling was, but that now he knows about other ways of schooling children he thinks that it is "not good to train the next generation like this."

Reports of similar practices happening in schools today are common. Several of the children in Eragayam Tengah reported being scared of being disciplined physically by the *guru honor* at the YPPGI school there. One Ob Anggen student said that before he had moved to Ob Anggen he had been registered at the YPPGI school and that the *guru honor* there used to hit him on the head with wood. He reported that when he saw the teachers outside of school he used to hide until they walked past him.

### **Private Schooling in Papua**

The vast majority of private schools in Papua are run by one of five faith-based education foundations: *Yayasan Pendidikan Kristen* (YPK, Christian Education Foundation), *Yayasan Pendidikan Islam* (YAPIS, Muslim Education Foundation), *Yayasan Pengembangan Pendidikan Katolik* (YPPK, Catholic Education Development Foundation), *Yayasan Pendidikan Advent* (YPA, Adventist Education Foundation), and *Yayasan Persekolahan Persahabatan Gereja-Gereja Injili* (YPPGI, Education Foundation

for Evangelical Churches) (ACDP, 2014). Each of these foundations constitutes the education arm of a religious body (ACDP, 2014, Farhadian, 2005). These five foundations are the main government partners in implementing education in Papua Province and they each receive a proportion of the Special Autonomy allocation of funds towards education (ACDP, 2014, Farhadian, 2005). The government is also closely involved in the selection of teachers in these schools - in fact the 2014 ACDP report claims that "almost all the teachers in the major religious *yayasan* schools are government teachers and one of the major weaknesses identified by the *yayasan* is the inability to select - or to be involved in the selection of - their teachers" (ACDP, 2014, 19, see also Farhadian, 2005). As a result, though these schools are technically private, in practice they are plagued by many of the same problems that affect state schools, including teacher absenteeism resulting in periodically closed schools.

With so many state and *yayasan* schools closed or inaccessible to children, and those that are operating too often leaving children and young adults no better equipped to deal with their rapidly changing environments than they were prior to the introduction of schooling, many foreign mission agencies have once again turned some of their funds and resources towards providing schooling for Papuan children in rural areas. In this, they have been joined by foreign-funded development agencies. Some of these schools, including Ob Anggen, serve only small areas but have become flagship examples of "promising local practice" for international development in rural and remote areas (ACDP, 2014, 81).

There are as many approaches to achieving quality schooling in these localised, remote contexts as there are schools trying to realise it. Some schools take children out of the highlands for the sake of education. One, for example, flies Papuan children to Jakarta (over six hours' flight away) to take advantage of state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities for schooling which focuses on maths and physics (see Somba, 2009, Surya Institute, 2009). Another, closer to home in the Papuan town of Sentani, hosts children from the highlands in dormitories and schools a diverse student population alongside them with the primary goal of seeing "godly Papuan men and women take their place as leaders in their communities, country and world" (Sekolah Papua Harapan, 2012). Others attempt to school children in their local communities, drawing



on resources and inspiration from both local culture and global practice. One school which is funded by UNDP aims to prepare children for school by teaching maths and language skills to pre-schoolers using spears, bows and other familiar tools (Sulthani, 2012, UNDP, 2012). *Yayasan Kristen Wamena* (YKW), funded by SERASI,<sup>30</sup> run a primary school in Wamena and are developing contextualised curriculum material for teaching Mathematics and Indonesian Language to highlanders (ACDP, 2014, International Relief and Development, 2013, SERASI, 2012, Yayasan Kristen Wamena, 2012). Another SERASI grantee - YASUMAT<sup>31</sup> - runs schools in the Yahukimo District and has also been involved in pioneering remote teacher training through a satellite internet connection as well as in using YKW's contextualised curriculum (ACDP, 2014, International Relief and Development, 2013, Papua Partners, 2012). It is in this diverse network of small, localised educational foundations serving the highlands that Ob Anggen, which is also part-funded by SERASI, finds itself (see Chapter Five for a detailed description of Ob Anggen).

## **Census Data on Schooling in Central Mamberamo Regency and Eragayam District**

The latest official Indonesian population census provides data on children's educational attainment in Eragayam District and in Central Mamberamo Regency, the district and regency within which Eragayam Tengah sits (BPS, 2010b). As noted above, the census data should be interpreted cautiously, especially when reporting on small scale, remote and hard-to-access regions like Eragayam District where meaningful census data is difficult to collect, not least because a minority of the population are fluent in Indonesian (BPS, 2010b). It is also unclear what criteria were used for considering someone as having completed a particular educational level. The census notes say that "a person who has not finished the highest grade but has taken the final exam and passed it is regarded as completing that educational level" (BPS, 2010b). In my experience people would probably have declared themselves to have completed an

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<sup>30</sup> SERASI is a USAID funded project which, among its other activities, provides small grants to "organisations that directly impact people's lives in the areas of health, education, and governance" (International Relief and Development, 2011, 7). *Serasi* means harmony in Indonesian; for an unknown reason the SERASI project title is always capitalised even though it is not an acronym.

<sup>31</sup> *Yayasan Sosial Untuk Masyarakat Terpencil* - Social Foundation for Remote Communities

educational level if, and only if, they had the certificate for that level. Given the problems with teacher-assisted cheating and the fact that school certificates are bought or exchanged in some cases, these definitions mean that recorded educational attainment levels, while indicative, are unlikely to accurately reflect individuals' levels of schooling-learned knowledge. Nonetheless, the census results on educational attainment and outcomes are interesting for comparative purposes.

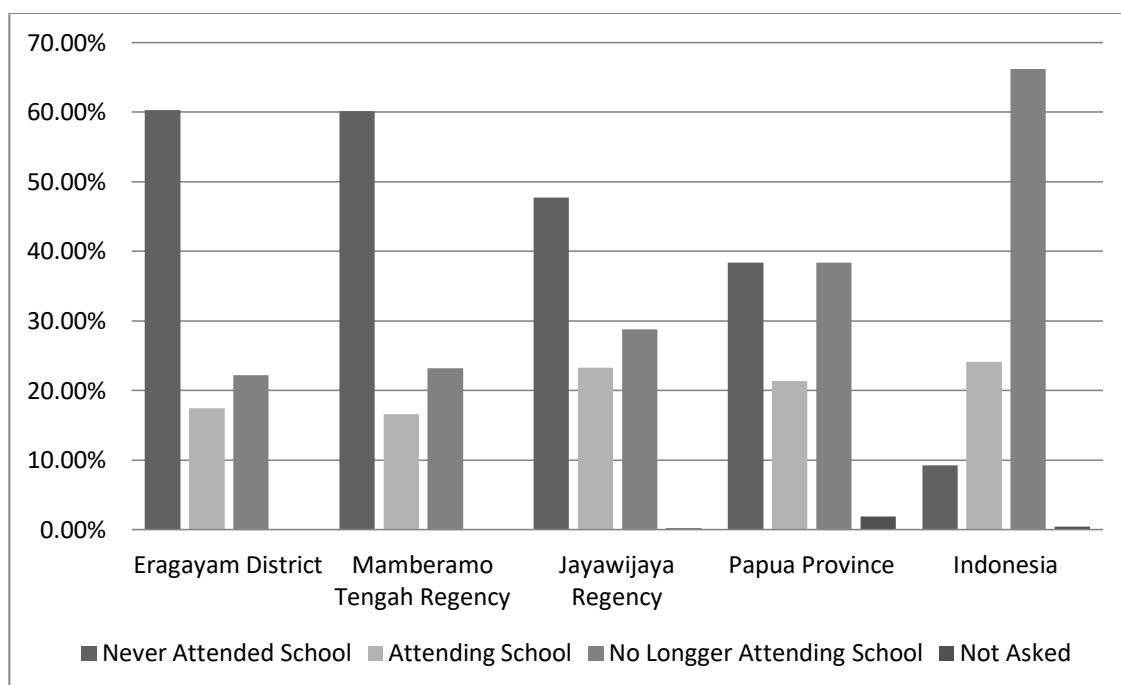
The census gives data about four education-related variables for the population over the age of five.<sup>32</sup> These were schooling status, educational attainment, literacy and ability to speak Indonesian. Here I present the data for each of these variables for Eragayam District and use graphs to compare them on the basis of percentage of population to the equivalent data for Central Mamberamo Regency, the neighbouring Jayawijaya Regency (chosen because it is the province most frequently used to represent the situation in the highlands in development reports which makes it a relevant reference point), Papua Province, and Indonesia as a whole.<sup>33</sup>

60.30% of the population over age five in Eragayam District were recorded as never having attended school, 17.46% as attending school at the time of the census in 2010 and 22.24% as no longer attending school (BPS, 2010b). As Graph 4.1 shows, these percentages are similar to those reported for Central Mamberamo Regency but compare poorly to Jayawijaya Regency, to Papua Province and to the nation.

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<sup>32</sup> 36,235 answers on education out of a total recorded population of 39,537 were recorded for Central Mamberamo, and 5,333 answers out of a total recorded population of 5,913 were recorded for Eragayam District.

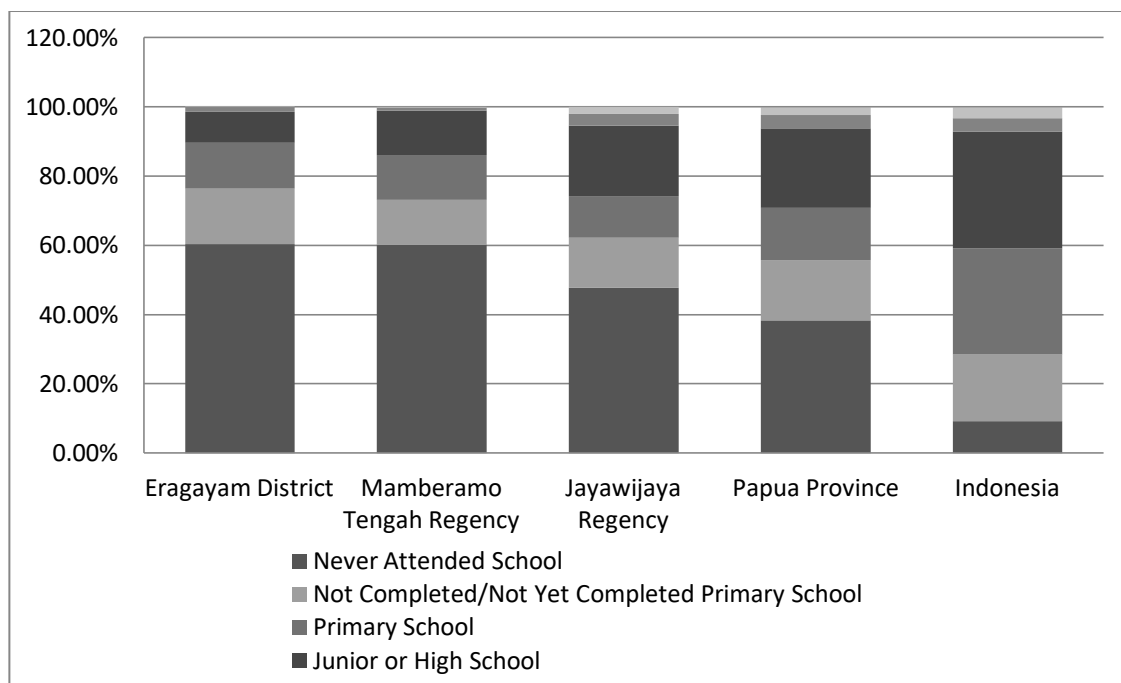
<sup>33</sup> All the data are available in both Indonesian and English from BPS (2010g).



**Graph 4.1: School Status as Percentage of the Population Over the Age of Five for Eragayam District, Central Mamberamo, Jayawijaya, Papua and Indonesia**

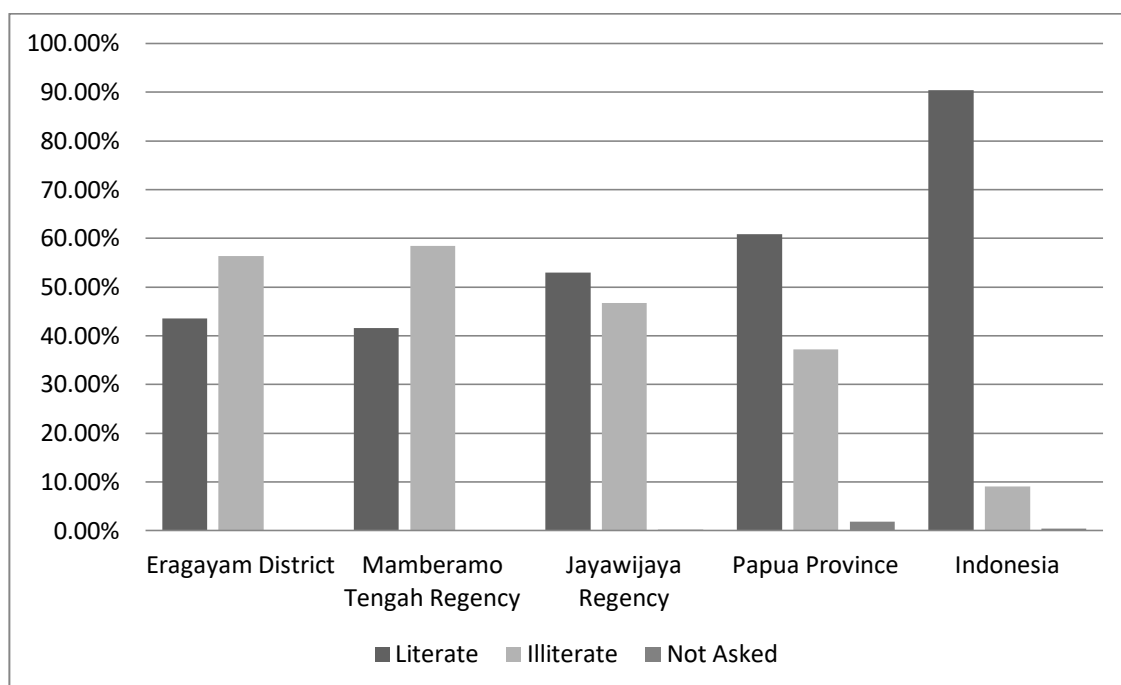
Data from BPS (2010a, b, f)

Graph 4.2 illuminates this data further by showing a breakdown of the highest educational achievements of those aged 5 years and over. As the graph shows, in 2010 only 10.33% of the population over the age of five in Eragayam District had completed primary school and gone on to complete a higher level of schooling. A further 13.26% had completed primary school without advancing further and 16.11% had started primary school but at the time of the census had not yet completed it. Only five individuals from Eragayam District were recorded as having completed a university level of education and none as having completed a postgraduate level of education. The majority, 60.30%, had never attended school. These levels of educational attainment are low in comparison to all but Eragayam District's own regency, which shows similar levels of educational attainment.



**Graph 4.2 Educational Attainment as Percentage of the Population Over the Age of Five for Eragayam District, Central Mamberamo, Jayawijaya, Papua and Indonesia**

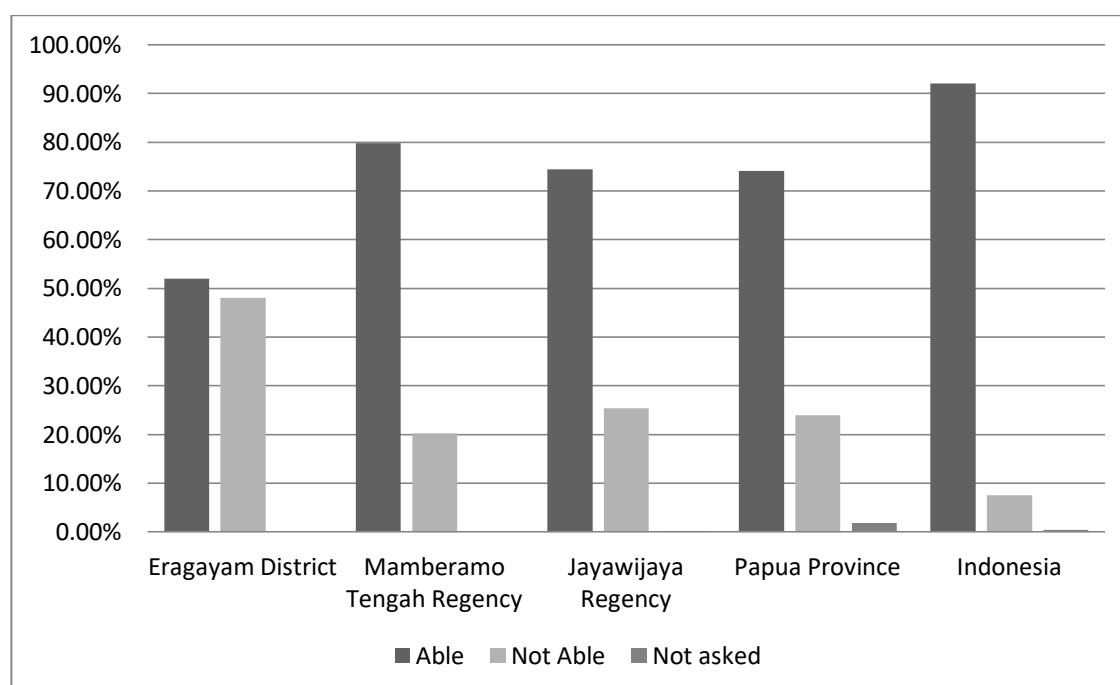
Data from BPS (2010a, b, d)



**Graph 4.3 Literacy as Percentage of the Population Over the Age of Five for Eragayam District, Central Mamberamo, Jayawijaya, Papua and Indonesia**

Data from BPS (2010a, b, e)

56.38% of the population over the age of five in Eragayam District were recorded as being illiterate in 2010. As Graph 4.3 shows, this is strikingly high even when compared to Papua Province, a province which is notorious for its high illiteracy rates. Even Jayawijaya Regency, which is known to have lower rates of literacy than Papua Province as a whole, recorded a higher percentage of literacy than illiteracy, but in Eragayam District and in Central Mamberamo Regency the proportion of the population over the age of five that was literate was in the minority.



**Graph 4.4 Ability to Speak Indonesian as Percentage of the Population Over the Age of Five for Eragayam District, Central Mamberamo, Jayawijaya, Papua and Indonesia**

Data from BPS (2010a, b, c)

In Eragayam District, 52% of the population over the age of five was recorded as able to speak Indonesian. This is a conspicuously low rate in comparison to other areas, as Graph 4.4 shows. Furthermore, the rate for females was lower than for males in Eragayam District. Only 47% of females over the age of five were recorded as able to speak Indonesian, compared to the rate of 76.65% for females over the age of five in Central Mamberamo Regency (BPS, 2010b).

As these data show, Eragayam District ranks low on every variable the 2010 census recorded about educational attainment, even when compared to Jayawijaya,

the regency most commonly cited as an example of educational failure in the highlands, or to Papua Province, the province which shows the lowest rates of educational achievement in the nation. This may be partly because those who succeed in schooling tend to leave Eragayam District and live in more urban areas, but that alone does not account for the extent of the disparity between Eragayam District and other parts of Indonesia.

### **State and YPPGI Schooling in Eragayam Tengah**



***The state SD, Eragayam***

The state SD school is a large building in good condition, situated near Efesus church (see map on page 36). The building was underused as the school rarely opened. On the various occasions that I visited, I never observed the school building open or the children in lessons, though I did once observe a mixed-age group of children outside the school being told by their teacher to do activities such as gather firewood. During the time allocation study, I also observed one of the teachers from the state SD along with a group of children carrying supplies from the taxi drop-off point back to

the school. Both Aaron's and my overall impression was that the school was less frequently operational than the SD YPPGI Mogonik that I describe below.

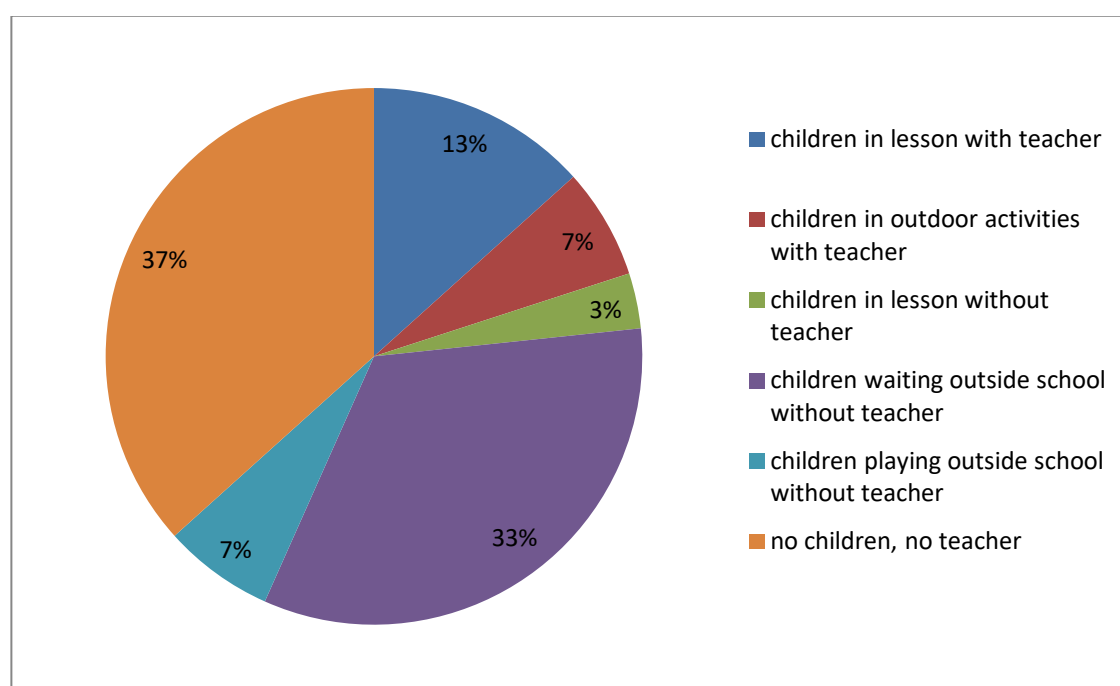


*The SD YPPGI Mogonik school sign which reads "The regency government, Central Mamberamo, Department of Education, SD YPPGI Mogonik" before giving a identifying number and address.*

The second primary school in Eragayam Tengah was a YPPGI school called SD YPPGI Mogonik. According to one of the *guru honor* who worked there it was subsidised by the state, which is typical for YPPGI schools. The school sign says that it is a school run under the local Department of Education, and it had many of the features of state schools in Papua described above. Like the state SD, its best resource was its building - it had an office and a storage room, as well as six spacious and adequately, albeit minimally equipped classrooms. The school was staffed by two teachers, both of whom were *guru honor*. One of these told me he had completed SMA schooling himself but had not yet trained to become a teacher. According to him, in the 1990s the school was overgrown, so he and the other *guru honor*, with the support of parents, decided to get it up and running as they "felt sorry" (*rasa kasihan* in the local

Indonesian) for the children. "We've seen results," he told me, "...children who are going to university." If this is so, it is due to these *guru honor*'s efforts as the headmaster and permanent teachers of the school live elsewhere. I only ever saw the headmaster once, when he turned up to deal with a dispute.

Aaron and I ran a randomised spot observation on the activities of SD YPPGI Magonik in February, March and April 2014. The table in Appendix Five shows a summary of what we found during each of the thirty random observations we made. Altogether, we made 303 observations of people on or passing through the school grounds. Of these, 10 were of *guru honor*, 117 were of schoolchildren in class, 139 were of schoolchildren out of class or in "outdoor activities," 18 were of people passing by and 19 were of unregistered children tagging along with schoolchildren. Graph 4.5 shows the results of the spot observation according to the number of times an observation showed teachers as present or absent. At least one of the *guru honor* was present (though not necessarily teaching) for only six of the thirty observation hours. During eleven observations, neither teacher nor schoolchildren were present: the school was locked up and apart from the odd passerby, there was no one around. On one of these occasions a child explained to Aaron that the *guru honor* had that school was closed as there was a funeral happening.



**Graph 4.5 SD YPPGI Magonik school activities by teachers' presence or absence**



Thirteen observations recorded schoolchildren present but no teacher. On one of these occasions, schoolchildren were in class - presumably the *guru honor* had previously been present to unlock the classrooms and would soon return. Two observations were of schoolchildren hanging around the school playing after class was over. More interesting, though, are the ten observations in which schoolchildren seemed to be waiting to see whether or not the *guru honor* would arrive. During one of these times, one of the *guru honor* did come but walked straight past the children up to a house behind the school. At a later observation on the same day, he was present. One day, an observation made at 8:30am recorded children singing while they waited for their teachers, but at 9am on the same day, no teachers had come and the children were playing football and skipping games.



***A classroom sits empty on a school day at SD YPPGI Magonik***

On another day, my 9am - 10am observation recorded seven schoolboys and a young boy not enrolled in school playing outside school while waiting for the teachers. At 10am, the boys started trying to break into the school. One managed to get his hand through the window and turn the pages of a book on the teacher's desk. Another

climbed up the walls to look through the grating, and also tried the office door. A third was more successful - he climbed up the walls and through a hole in roof and managed to get into the school loft. From there, he found a ceiling tile missing and was able to lower himself into the classroom, followed by three of his friends. Previously, people had been walking past without paying attention to the schoolboys waiting outside the closed school, but when the mother of one of them came along while they were trying to break into the school, she yelled angrily at them, hit her child, and managed to stop what they were doing.



***Children breaking into SD YPPGI Mogonik during school hours***

Sometimes (on Fridays, one of the *guru honor* told me) children were supervised outside doing what the *guru honor* called "outdoor activities." These involved activities such as cutting the grass in the schoolyard, but on the Friday when I observed these outdoor activities twenty-two of the children were playing marbles, with only two of them stopping to cut the grass occasionally and three helping the *guru honor* to mend the school fence. The other *guru honor* was absent. Two non-schoolchildren were also playing nearby and another child was looking after her

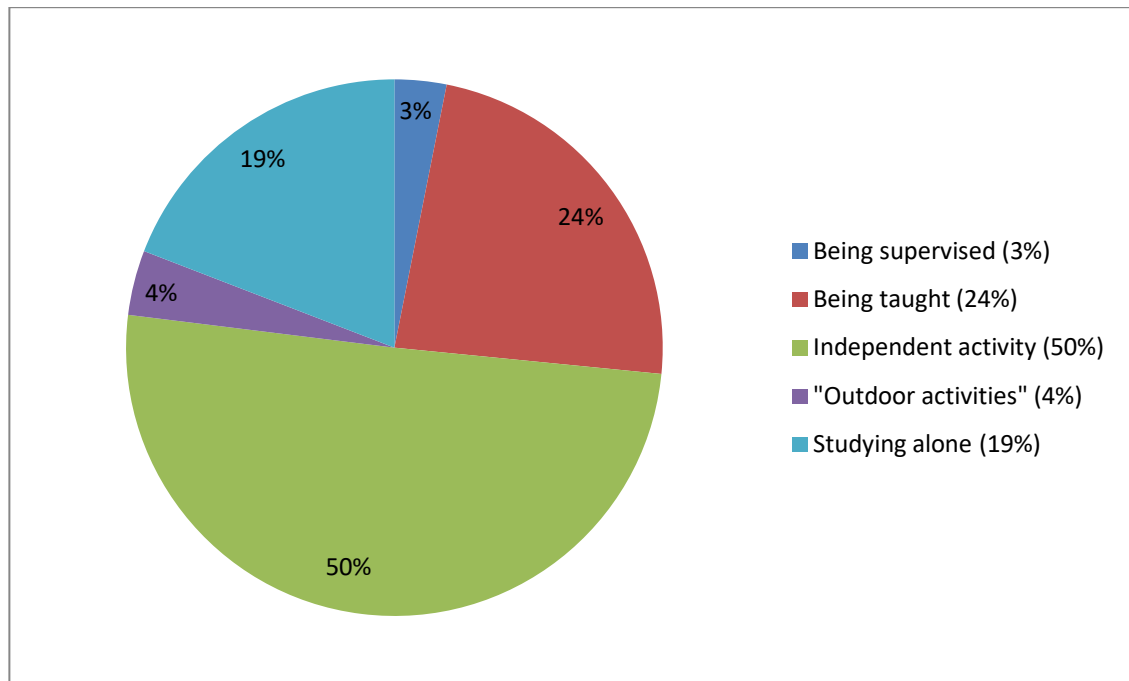
younger sister with a friend. These "outdoor activities" accounted for two of the observations when teachers were present.

In three of the observations, both *guru honor* were present and had spread themselves and the students between the available classrooms. On one of the days one *guru honor* supervised two grade six students studying, while the other taught IPS (social sciences) to nine students in another classroom. On another day, one *guru honor* taught PKN (citizenship) to nine grades five and six students while the other *guru honor* taught IPA (science) to seventeen grades two and three students. A further fourteen grade one students studied Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) on their own in a third classroom. On a third day, six grade one students again studied alone, while one *guru honor* taught mathematics to fourteen grades three and four students and the other *guru honor* supervised six grade six students. On the day when only one *guru honor* was present he left five grades five and six students studying alone in one classroom, and three grades three and four students studying alone in another classroom, while he taught the fifteen grades one and two students who had turned up that day.

Overall, some school activity was in progress during seven of the thirty observations. These activities included two observations of supervised outdoor activities and five observations of lessons. The observations of lessons included five classrooms of students being taught, two classrooms of students being supervised by a *guru honor*, and seven classrooms of students studying alone. The average class size for students being supervised was four (ranging from 2 to 6), for students being taught it was 12.8 (ranging from 9 to 17) and for students studying alone it was 7.29 (ranging from 3 to 14). There were also nine observations of younger siblings not enrolled in school who sat in the classrooms with an older sibling who was enrolled in school. The classes were, necessarily, multi-age, but the *guru honor* tried to organise them by approximate grade level. In the brief observations we made, the children seemed to be quiet, well-behaved and responsive to their teachers while they were in the classrooms.

Graph 4.6 shows a breakdown of the percentage of observations made for each activity that schoolchildren were observed doing ("independent activities" refers

mostly to playing but includes watching other children play and breaking into the school).



**Graph 4.6 SD YPPGI Magonik school activities by percentage of schoolchildren observed doing them during spot observations in school hours**

These results may seem to condemn the *guru honor* for their irregular attendance, but *guru honor* are not the only ones to blame for this school's unreliability. The *guru honor* are neither trained nor supported to run a school, and even if they were, two minimally resourced men are insufficient to manage a school of six classrooms. In addition, the salaried and so-called permanent teachers and the head teacher of this school, who are better paid than the *guru honor*, are far more frequently absent than are the untrained *guru honor* on whose shoulders they leave their responsibilities.

Furthermore, as I shall argue in Chapter Eight, a concept of work in which people are required to sacrifice their autonomy and flexibility in order to undertake discretely defined activities is foreign to Walak people. Both the *guru honor* have obligations like those that all men living locally have (see Chapter Two) and no position - be it pastor, village head or teacher - is seen as sufficient excuse to overlook them. It is understandable that the *guru honor* reshape the role of teacher to ensure it allows

enough flexibility to accommodate attending funerals, maintaining one's buildings and fences and other obligations. It is - in part at least - a commitment to upholding Walak values which takes the *guru honor* away from school, a point which any attempt at school reform must first understand.

Nonetheless, parents do get frustrated at some of the practices their children are subjected to in the state and YPPGI schools. In March 2013, the father of a young man who had attended both SD YPPGI Mogonik and the state SMP school nailed up the doors and windows of both schools in broad daylight, triggering a meeting of the head teachers, teachers and parents to resolve the problems that angered him. As I asked school kids and other parents, who condoned this man's actions, what his motivations were, they explained that it is a typical practice at the SD school to change children's names at school, recording their pass results and school certificates in the wrong names. This causes confusion when children then try to register for *SMA* in Wamena. Some children's certificates are in other people's names, and some have even had their *aluak* changed, a name which indicates who their father and ancestors are, shows who they are obligated to and protected by, and determines who they can marry. Others report their ages being wrongly recorded, leading to them being denied entry into *SMA* for being too young. There are even reports of males being recorded as females and vice versa. The reasons for these errors are not known. One of my Walak friends suggested that perhaps it was because the head teacher had to send off a list of results and did not want to take the time and effort to make sure all the names and corresponding results were correct. The resolution meeting following the parent's outburst went ahead, but reports as to how successful it was varied.

One of the parents expressed frustration that it is only in rural areas that teachers charge for children's pass results (see Appendix Six). Another parent told Aaron that his son used to go to school at the SD YPPGI Mogonik but that one of the teachers had said that even though he was in grade one, he needed to be moved to grade three as he could already read. Later, the teacher apparently told this parent that his son could already do everything in grade three and so needed to be moved to grade five. The parent did not like this as he felt his son was not being given a chance

to learn, and, as he told it to Aaron, when Ob Anggen started he was quick to register his son for the new school.

## **Conclusion**

Wherever education occurs it is the product of the particular histories and politics of its context, shaped by agendas and philosophies of those who have introduced it, advocated for it, funded it and administered it. As Papuans have learned through experience, schooling is often promoted as a way of empowering people who are viewed as marginalised, but it can also be used to ensure people serve the goals of the powerful. The dilemma of how to use schooling to benefit Papuans without further harming them continues to be one of the pressing educational issues facing Papua Province today. Since schools were first introduced to Papua, many schools have been built to serve rural areas and yet a large proportion of them do not operate, function ineffectively, or are accused of failing to benefit the people they allegedly serve. To an extent, Indonesia continues to use liberal capitalist paradigms to promote schooling as a nation-building and modernisation tool. However, it has also come under particular pressure to improve schooling in Papua from international development organisations who view schooling as a fundamental good and a human right. Some religious organisations partner with the provincial government to provide schooling but these schools exhibit many of the same problems that state schools do (ACDP, 2014, Pikkert, 2013), as the spot observation data on YPPGI school in Eragayam Tengah, where educational outcomes are even lower than provincial ones, exemplifies.

Ob Anggen schools, by contrast, are seen to be succeeding by nearly all their stakeholders. As religious, not-for-profit, private schools that are directed by an American missionary and serve rural areas, Ob Anggen schools are reminiscent of the early mission schools. However, unlike those schools, which were co-opted by the Dutch colonial administration, Ob Anggen works with development agencies and seeks to provide an alternative to failing state schools. In many ways, Ob Anggen schools are an embodiment of the practices international development agencies advocate in their calls for state schooling reform. As such, Ob Anggen Eragayam makes an appropriate comparator to children's indigenous education. In the next chapter, I analyse the Ob Anggen model of schooling.

# Chapter Five: Ob Anggen School

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Ob Anggen started its operations in Eragayam Tengah in August 2012, but as an educational foundation it had been operating in Bokondini for many years before that, and its history, vision, values and structures have shaped how the Eragayam Tengah school operates. Ob Anggen's founder, the American missionary and community development worker Benjamin Wisley (known as Scotty), explains that the Bokondini school began because he and his wife who lived in rural Papua were contemplating schooling options for their two young children. They were unsatisfied with what was on offer locally but unwilling to send their children away to boarding school. They considered homeschooling, but after reflecting on the Christian tenet to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31) they decided that if they were unsatisfied with the options available for their children's schooling, their Papuan neighbours were most likely unsatisfied too. They therefore decided to start a small school that would serve both their own children and their neighbours' children with an international standard of education in the rural highland village of Bokondini. The school was named Ob Anggen, which means "good fruit" in the local Lani language. The Ob Anggen school in Eragayam Tengah was the second Ob Anggen school to be founded (a third was started in a place called Dogobak in the summer of 2014). In this chapter, I describe Ob Anggen's structure, vision, values and expectations of staff, and then focus on how these values affect the running of the school in Eragayam Tengah.<sup>34</sup>

## **Structure, Funding and Infrastructure**

The Ob Anggen foundation is run by Scotty Wisley, the director, together with a leadership team which he formed and now heads and trains. The leadership team includes head teachers for each school who are accountable to the director and to whom the teachers in that school report. Eragayam Tengah is about a two-hour motorbike ride away from Bokondini, where Scotty lives, but despite the limited communication Eragayam Tengah school has with Bokondini, the governance structure

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<sup>34</sup> I describe Ob Anggen in the present tense. However, it should be noted that my description and analysis is based largely on data from the fieldwork period, and the organisation is growing and changing rapidly.

is fairly centralised. The majority of the decisions that affect the running of the school are made with Scotty's authorisation. Consequently, leadership team members make frequent visits between the two schools. The Ob Anggen authority structure is also hierarchical: all staff members are encouraged to share their ideas and input openly, but when a decision needs to be made or conflicts arise, compliance with the team leader, head teacher or director is expected. In practice, the head teachers and leadership team defer to the director if there is any serious disagreement.

Most of the Ob Anggen staff are Papuans, a large proportion of whom are highlanders. Many of them met and got to know the Wisleys through *Netaiken* - a Christian tertiary education and discipleship institute. Others were recruited to Ob Anggen through STKIP Kristen Wamena - a Christian teacher training institute just outside Wamena. The team also includes a few non-Papuan Indonesians and non-Indonesian staff members. Foreign Ob Anggen staff members fundraise for their own salaries, and are also expected to fundraise enough to contribute financially to the general school funds. National Ob Anggen staff are paid salaries. These, and the other costs of running the school, are financed largely through the fundraising efforts of the Wisley family and are supplemented by grants from donor organisations such as SERASI (a USAID grant programme, see Chapter Four) and by school fees. In 2013-2014, Ob Anggen school fees were Rp. 600,000 a year (approximately £40) at both schools, though for the first semester in Eragayam Tengah parents contributed labour for building the school facilities in lieu of school fees.

From the start the Ob Anggen staff team had to provide all the infrastructure for the schools - they build their own buildings, generate and ration their own electricity, fix and maintain their own vehicles, and source their own suppliers for any additional facilities needed, such as an internet connection. The investment of donors has made it possible for the school to install some state-of-the-art technology, but the conditions make it difficult to maintain them. As the Bokondini team discovered to their dismay, promethean active boards (a type of interactive whiteboard) and cockroach nests do not mix well. To run a school in these conditions is ambitious, and demands much of the highly committed staff members.



## **Vision and Values**

Ob Anggen's stated vision is to offer an international standard of Christian education that empowers families and transforms the community. Their plan is to do this by establishing SD (primary) schools in villages and eventually also establishing a central SMP (middle) and SMA (secondary) school which these primary schools would feed into. During my fieldwork, Ob Anggen focused most of its resources on the first part of the stated vision, namely to provide an international standard of primary education in the rural highlands of Papua.

### **Provide An International Standard of Education in the Rural Highlands**

One of the core purposes of the schools from Ob Anggen's perspective is to bring better schooling to rural-dwelling children, rather than sending children away to better schools. Scotty defends this principle spiritually on the basis that family is a God-created institution which should not be broken on account of the man-made institution of schooling, and historically on the basis that it usually ends disastrously for indigenous children and their families when children go to boarding schools away from their kin and land.

Scotty's intention is that children attending one of the Ob Anggen schools should be educated to a standard equivalent to that available in countries whose school systems have a good reputation internationally. Consequently, Ob Anggen staff hope that children who have received an education at Ob Anggen will be able to enter, or re-enter, education systems in Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States and will be equipped to compete with their peers internationally if and when they do so. This hope was tested when the Wisley children, who are both Ob Anggen pupils and American citizens, took American tests and visited America and were expected to integrate into the schools there, which they did successfully.

In order to achieve its goal of achieving an international standard of education Ob Anggen draws on a number of curricula. The Indonesian national curriculum is used to teach some subjects, such as citizenship, religion and Indonesian, while other subjects such as maths, science and English are taught using curriculum material taken from other educational systems. Scotty is not himself an education specialist, so he

drew on the expertise of others to inform his pedagogical decisions. In fact, one of the contributions Scotty asked Aaron and me to make during my fieldwork was to spend a week doing online research about the quality and availability of various international curricula to help inform their decisions about which ones to draw on in shaping Ob Anggen's own curriculum.

Ob Anggen also teaches children computing and internet skills and prioritises the use of up-to-date technology such as interactive whiteboards and digital tablets. Staff also attempt to teach children to speak English fluently, a skill which their parents are eager for them to have as English is viewed as a language which enables mobility and provides access to international networks of power. Teaching the Ob Anggen students time management and hard, consistent work by ensuring Ob Anggen was open for 180 school days a year and ran seven hours a day was also part of the vision of an international standard of excellence. As Scotty said in one presentation to the Ob Anggen team, "we are trying to prepare kids to be able to succeed outside Indonesia, so that means we include things like time management."

### **A Christian Education**

Ob Anggen is open to children of all faiths and backgrounds but the schooling it provides is explicitly Christian. The definition of "Christian" beliefs, values and morals varies widely; I use it here as it is used in Ob Anggen, which takes a position that can be broadly defined as Protestant evangelical.<sup>35</sup> There are differences of beliefs on the team, but as commitment to the team and submission to team leadership are strongly promoted within Ob Anggen, and as differences of beliefs have little bearing on daily activities, theological conflicts rarely arise.

Scotty sees Christian discipleship as an important part of his vocation. He defines discipleship as helping people grow and mature spiritually, personally and professionally by living among and alongside them in such a way that mentoring and

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<sup>35</sup> American politics have led to the term "evangelical" being associated with a conservative Republican position but I mean rather that Ob Anggen promotes certain priorities which are not shared by all Christians globally. These include a belief in the centrality of the Bible, a belief that salvation cannot be earned but is a free gift made possible because of Jesus' death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, a belief that individuals can have a personal relationship with God regardless of their culture or relatives' beliefs, and a motivation to promote Christian beliefs to others.

teaching opportunities occur in the course of everyday life. Within Ob Anggen, discipleship of staff, who in turn disciple Ob Anggen children (including Scotty's own son and daughter), is the primary model of the Christian mission element of the Wisley's and Ob Anggen's missionary activities. Ob Anggen staff have expressed a hope that eventually the schoolchildren will influence their parents, families and communities. The focus of discipleship in Ob Anggen is the development of character, confidence and the living out of Christian morals. Christian teaching is integrated into school lessons and teachers are encouraged to build relationships with children for the purpose of discipling them.

### **Empowering Families**

The second part of Ob Anggen's vision is to empower families. This aspect of Ob Anggen's work is less established than the commitment to provide an international standard of education. In fact, it is not always immediately clear in exactly what ways Ob Anggen perceives pupils' families to be disempowered, let alone what Ob Anggen could do to empower them. Most frequently this part of the vision was used to refer to the fact that schooling itself - especially foreign-run schooling - too often disempowers parents and weakens families by alienating children from their parents. Ob Anggen staff intend to counter this tendency, so the Ob Anggen director insists that the primary schools must be based close to pupils' homes, even though it would be easier to provide a high standard of education if the schools were located in urban centres. Ob Anggen also has a rule that no pupil can enrol who is not living at home with at least one birth parent (or adopted parent, if they are orphaned); children are not allowed to board with relatives away from their parents in order to attend the school.

The empowering families part of the vision is also used to underline the belief that Ob Anggen schools must be run in partnership with parents and with the local church. The Ob Anggen leadership team proactively assert that parents and the local church leaders are partners with whom they share the goal of improving local children's futures. They also insist that without the parents' support they would not be able to run the schools. Scotty blames poor development practice for creating disempowering relationships of dependency, in which indigenous people are seen only as victims or passive recipients, and in which what they have to offer is undervalued.

Ob Anggen's policy is to take a contrasting strengths-based approach, as Scotty explains in one of Ob Anggen's promotional videos (Wisley, 2015a, translated by me from the local Indonesian):

If I value culture and family, I will become inclusive rather than exclusive. I will include family and culture in day-to-day school affairs. I will also see the potential and strength that is in each family. I will be scared to sacrifice what God created - family - to prioritise what people have created, such as education. In research about free education programmes that exist all around the world...in *The Beautiful Tree*,<sup>36</sup> the author evidences that free programmes always result in the lowest quality, [but in] programmes in which parents pay, donate or give what they can, they feel a sense of ownership and the result is the highest quality education.

In order to counteract the dependency model, Ob Anggen has a policy of not starting a school in a new area unless the local residents can commit resources towards it. In addition to school fees, such resources could include a building to use as interim teachers' housing, labour to build a road to provide access to the school, land and labour for building the school and local people who are willing to be trained to work in the school. Parents' meetings also always start with staff thanking the parents for the work they have done which has contributed to the school's success. Parents' evenings, parent and child retreats, parents' fundraising events for the school, home visits and a number of other initiatives are held to include parents in the school's activities. This, according to Scotty, is a way to "instil pride" and "give them dignity" as his summary of a parents' meeting in another Ob Anggen video (Wisley, 2012a) communicates:

First thing we want to do is we want to establish relationship, trust, unity. We want to focus on the partnership, so we just really thank and encourage and instil pride in all the parents for their part, what they have given, what they have supported, and really seek to give them dignity and create pride in them. Enforce, encourage, the idea that this is *our* school in partnership, the church, the parents and Ob Anggen working together as one family.

The language of "giving" people dignity and "instilling" pride implies that the schoolchildren's parents did not already have dignity and pride. This, according to the Ob Anggen narrative, has not always been the case. However, in Scotty's estimation, rural-dwelling Papuans' pride and dignity has been eroded in recent years by the so-

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<sup>36</sup> (Tooley, 2009)

called development that Papua has seen over the last few decades. Schooling, he argues, has been part of the problem, not only because children can get a school diploma without being able to read or write, but more importantly because the beatings, criticisms and name-calling that occur in many schools break children's spirits and sense of self-worth (Wisley, 2015a, see Chapter Four). An influx of "free money" or "welfare" (in part funded by Special Autonomy) has done its share of damage by instilling the expectations of excessive reward without labour, which directly counters the value of hard work embedded in Ob Anggen (see below). Missionaries are also often criticised in this narrative for the harm they have done in separating children from their families and in inadvertently undermining Papuans by their powerful, wealthy, and - crucially - separate lifestyles. The consequence, the argument goes, is that Papuan people have too often positioned themselves as weak as a way of gaining access to these foreign or state resources, sometimes because of laziness, sometimes because that is how they have been taught to achieve their aims, and sometimes because their sense of identity and confidence has been crushed through years of emotional abuse. Thus part of Ob Anggen's mission was to empower them through a strengths-based approach. As one video, 'Why we don't do Free School, Ob Anggen' (Wisley, 2015b) candidly puts it, "parents are not beggars but partners with dignity."

Part of this approach, also subsumed under the empowering families aspect of the vision, is emphasising that Ob Anggen schooling is not intended to be a form of surrogate parenting. Raising a child is presented as a partnership effort, just as running the school is, but whereas the primary responsibility for running the school lies with Ob Anggen, the primary responsibility for raising the child lies with the parents. Teachers encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's education by teaching their children what they know (for example "life skills" such as "farming," see Wisley, 2015b) and by using their own languages with them at home to ensure children learn these, as well as Indonesian and English which are used at school. Parents are also asked to get involved in children's schooling by sitting with them while they do homework and attending parents' meetings and prize-giving events. Somewhat paradoxically, Ob Anggen also tries to influence families to raise their children in line with values that Ob Anggen staff hold. Parents are asked not to try to

control their children's behaviour through threats of fearful consequences, especially untrue ones, as Ob Anggen staff believe that doing so damages a child's self-confidence and trust in the parent and other authority figures. Teachers also asked parents to stop calling their children words like "stupid," and they changed children's first names if they mean something perceived as insulting, such as "throw away." Ob Anggen proactively encourages displays of parental pride in front of children (Wisley, 2012b) and encourages fathers to stay with their families rather than going off to town for extended periods of time. Although these interventions could be considered disempowering of parents, they are framed among Ob Anggen staff as ways of training and equipping parents to be the best parents they can be.

The Ob Anggen director is also aware of the fact that schooling can alienate children from their families even without physically separating them from each other. He hopes that the strategies described above will counteract this tendency. The text 'Differing Responses of Missionaries towards the Indigenous Culture, New Britain, 1886' contrasts two types of attitudes that Protestant missionaries held in the late nineteenth century. The author describes one attitude as "All native manners and customs must be completely uprooted in order to make a true Christian..." and the other as being held by those "missionaries...with a true understanding of the nature of Christianity, who respect the harmless customs of the native where they are not in direct conflict with Christian tenets" (Parkinson, 1975 [1886], 415). Scotty and the Ob Anggen staff held the latter perspective. The challenge they set themselves is to show value for the aspects of local culture, heritage and language "not in direct conflict with Christian tenets" whilst changing those that they think are, all the while preparing children to navigate cross-cultural leadership and equipping them for international success. Which aspects of Walak culture are and are not in direct conflict with Christian beliefs is a matter of interpretation, of course. In practice, it is what the school staff called animist beliefs, particularly beliefs which lead people to take actions for fear of avoiding terrible consequences at the hands of the spirits or of God, which the staff most frequently seek to change. As for showing value to the local culture, the school in Bokondini incorporates local dress and traditions into some class activities, and events such as the school dedication in Eragyam Tengah are run by Walak people as a Walak

event (see below). Overall though, the primary mechanism the school has for valuing local culture is valuing family. Situating the school in the children's own neighbourhood is intended to upset the conventional school-family power dynamic sufficiently that parents remain the biggest influence on their children's lives and development.

### **Transforming Communities**

The third and final part of Ob Anggen's vision is to use schooling to transform communities. This is the least developed and least invested-in aspect of the vision, as Scotty openly acknowledges with the team. Nonetheless, there are a number of oft-repeated Ob Anggen principles which can be thought of as belonging to the "transforming communities" aspect of the Ob Anggen vision.

One principle Ob Anggen insists on is that the school be open to children of all faiths and ethnicities, which means that in Bokondini, Lani children are schooled alongside children of Muslim Indonesian migrants and military personnel. Ob Anggen hopes that the children, and eventually their families, will find a way to build respectful relationships across the divides caused by both unjust prejudices and just grievances. Scotty also talks often of the dangers of what he calls tribalism. By this, he means that people's commitment to benefit their "tribes" (loosely defined) leads to corruption and the siphoning of resources by people, such as head teachers, who have been entrusted with the responsibility of benefiting many. This is one source of poverty in Papua in his estimation. Another is animist beliefs, which, he argues, lead people to pour the ample resources that are available for community development into appeasing spirits and making reparation payments (Wisley, 2015a). Although Scotty hopes to transform "tribalism" and "animist" beliefs, the school does not directly address these issues except through the strategies already described.

Perhaps the most important part of Ob Anggen's vision for transforming communities is preparing leaders for the future. Preparing leaders is (and has long been - see Chapter Four) a purpose of schooling common to mission schools in Papua. It is also a purpose supported in Eragayam Tengah by parents and other Walak adults who hope that schooling will result in future Walak leaders, as the sign from the Ob Anggen School Dedication Ceremony demonstrates (see picture on page 154).

However, as I will argue, there are differences between what Ob Anggen and Walak adults mean by this (see Chapter Nine).

### **Expectations of Staff**

Ob Anggen sets high standards for its team members and, in contrast to many state schools, they are strictly enforced. A high proportion of the team has had a patchy history of schooling due to the problems with state schooling in Papua Province, and Ob Anggen found it a challenge to provide an education which was so different from that which many of their teachers had themselves received. A background in teaching was not a requirement for employment; Ob Anggen is more concerned about potential employees' character and commitment to hard work. The result of an ambitious vision and a somewhat ill-equipped team is that a lot is required of staff members. Hard work is highly valued, as is personal sacrifice, particularly when that sacrifice is for the sake of the team or for Ob Anggen pupils. Intense loyalty to the Ob Anggen team and to its values is expected. On the basis of an all-in commitment, staff members' children were expected to attend Ob Anggen.

Ob Anggen staff members are also obliged to live a Christian lifestyle as part of a Christian community in order to remain employed by the school. They commit themselves to living in "a community of growth and grace," which involves, among other things, agreeing to live in a way that is closely connected to (or "in community with") the rest of the staff by participating in shared meals, weekly fun nights and training weekends, being willing to be accountable to a single-gender "growth group" in which a personal area for growth is shared and the group holds each other accountable to proactively improving that area of life, and being willing to forgive and, where possible, overlook offenses. This helps to facilitate the smooth running of a large cross-cultural team.

In return for this intense commitment, Ob Anggen invests heavily in its staff members' personal and professional development. The Wisleys value the Ob Anggen staff members more than any of the organisation's other resources and they are personally dedicated to supporting the staff members. The Wisleys seek to share their lives, their values and their possessions with team members, modelling an all-in



commitment themselves. Retreats, meetings, and on-the-job training are all a part of the regular rhythm of Ob Anggen life, and the school seeks to meet, or if necessary outsource, as many of its staff members' pastoral and medical needs as it is able to. Training weekends are held regularly, and international guest speakers are often invited to share their expertise with staff members. A number of teachers and other staff members are also given an opportunity to travel abroad to visit other schools as part of their professional development. Staff members are regularly praised, and whilst team members are expected to achieve a lot with limited resources and to work hard while living uncomplainingly in sometimes difficult physical conditions, whenever the leaders are able to improve the staff members' lot they prioritise doing so. Sometimes that is by fixing up staff members' housing, other times it is simply by buying in frozen chickens for the team fun night to ensure everyone gets to eat some meat that week.

Scotty, and consequently the rest of the team, refer to the fact that Ob Anggen aims to achieve so much with such limited resources as their "crazy" or "impossible" vision. On the one hand this reminds them to have faith that God can do the impossible. On the other hand, the challenge reminds the staff of their ambitious shared goals that would not be achievable without sacrifices, hard work and loyalty to the team. Each of the staff members has given up something to be part of Ob Anggen. Non-Papuans have moved far away from their families and given up varying degrees of personal privilege (including, for non-Indonesians, a salary) in order to live in a part of Indonesia still most famous for its alleged primitiveness. Papuans have had to deny their familial obligations in order to meet the requirements of their jobs which preclude staff absenteeism for all but the most serious of reasons, and which do not pay well enough to allow staff members to distribute much wealth among their kin. These sacrifices and challenges unite the staff and further intensify the camaraderie and loyalty between them.

### **Ob Anggen School in Eragayam Tengah**

The Ob Anggen school in Eragayam Tengah was started by a small team, the head teacher of which was Oreb Gombo - a Walak man from the area whose idea it had been to begin the school. He was joined by his Dani wife, a Lani married couple,

and a single Yali man, all of whom had previously worked at the school in Bokondini. A local Walak man also joined the team as an assistant teacher, and Aaron joined the team in October 2012 (see Chapter Three). This team grew and changed over time. A total of seventeen people were part of the team in Eragayam Tengah during my fieldwork though never more than fourteen at a time.<sup>37</sup>

The school enrolled seventy-five children in its first year - twenty-five in each of three classes (TK,<sup>38</sup> 1 and 1). As there was no school building, the teachers used the front room of the house we all shared for the TK class and divided the church building in two with a tarpaulin, holding Classes One and Two on either side of it. School started at 8am every morning and ran for seven or eight hours, including breaks, consistently following an agreed schedule. The subjects covered were learning the calendar, Bible, mathematics, Indonesian, English, reading, citizenship, science, art and physical education. Memorisation through song and playful chants was one technique used for learning new vocabulary; other lessons utilised storytelling and educational games. Children were encouraged to be creative, to try new things, and to enjoy school. Active learning was promoted and lessons employed play as an educational technique. Teachers often tried to make their pupils laugh and to engage their enthusiastic compliance rather than controlling their behaviour with threats. Children were frequently praised by teachers and one topic that arose in staff team meetings was how to encourage students who were difficult to praise because of their behaviour. Hitting was not allowed as a form of discipline. Instead, children were given "consequences" (*konsekuensi*) which meant they had to stay and do less interesting tasks after school hours. In these pedagogical decisions, the Ob Anggen staff sought to provide Walak children with experiences of schooling opposite to the negative ones that they criticise the state school system for and which many of them had experienced as children.

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<sup>37</sup> These numbers include Aaron but exclude me and the team of builders who moved temporarily from Bokondini to build the new school facilities.

<sup>38</sup> TK stands for *taman kanak kanak* which means kindergarten in Indonesian.



***Ob Anggen classes 1 and 2 meet in the church building, September 2012***

Source: M. Karobanak

Unlike the early missionary schools in Papua, lessons were not taught in the vernacular. The children were encouraged to only use Indonesian in school and eventually, in an attempt to get the children to learn Indonesian more quickly, they were reprimanded and disciplined for speaking Walak in some of their lessons. This practice broke official school policy and I challenged it on several occasions. In response, the teachers protested that they did not have materials in Walak and that the children were free to speak Walak as much as they wished outside of school hours. The teachers did not seem to know the school's policy on indigenous language use in lessons, which an Ob Anggen trainer and the director both confirmed was not to punish children for speaking their own language. The trainer and director agreed, though, that the emphasis in school was on learning Indonesian and English as the children spoke Walak at home. The director did address the importance of not punishing children for using their own language, even showing an emotional video in a training session of an Amerindian man who wept as he recalled being punished for using his mother tongue in school. However, the official policy of never punishing children for speaking their mother tongue was not actively enforced and several of the

Eragayam Tengah staff, frustrated as they were by their limited ability to communicate with their pupils, continued to discipline those who spoke Walak in class.

At first, the infrastructure in Eragayam Tengah was minimal. Staff joked about being "original" (*asli*) photocopiers as they handwrote worksheets for each of their students. Over time teachers' housing and a school building were built, the solar panels were adjusted to provide a more reliable electricity supply, and after months of trying, a satellite internet connection was successfully installed. The new school building was dedicated with speeches and feasting in January 2014 (see pages 151-159).



*The new Ob Anggen school building in Eragayam Tengah, dedicated in January 2014*

## **Partnership with Parents in Eragayam Tengah**

Though a value for partnership work is held by staff in both Bokondini and Eragayam Tengah, there are differences between the Bokondini and the Eragayam Tengah models of partnership with parents. Behind closed doors, staff in both Bokondini and Eragayam Tengah talk respectfully and often with awe and admiration about pupils' parents. Even when staff are frustrated at what they see as the negative effects of animism on parents' behaviour, or at the lack of foresight in local people's

political manoeuvrings, they talk about these issues amongst themselves with concern rather than condescension. However, the model developed in Bokondini, where the school is more self-sufficient and is physically set apart from the village, is that the school sets the agenda and terms of the relationship between school and parents. In Eragayam Tengah, the school operates as a more equal partnership between parents and teachers. Teachers do determine parents' meeting agendas, praise parents during these meetings, ask them to consider changing some practices (such as calling children "stupid") and communicate what the school requires of them as their contribution to the partnership. However, the Eragayam Tengah school is more closely entwined with indigenous affairs than in Bokondini, the school population is more homogenous and the teachers are more dependent on local people. For example, parents provide the teachers' food, bringing gifts of vegetables and sweet potatoes from their gardens. This situates the teachers as passive recipients who owe a debt to the parents, rather than the other way around. The pioneering team in Eragayam Tengah saw their pupils' parents as strong, equal partners whom they entirely relied upon for the success of the school. This dynamic began to shift slightly when the Ob Anggen staff team size grew and became more self-sufficient, staff turnover increased, and the school became more established and less dependent on local resources.

Ob Anggen was also well received by Walak parents in Eragayam Tengah. The Walak assistant teacher commented in a school team meeting following an early parents' meeting that people were noting that even though Ob Anggen had just started, there was already a stream of books and teachers into the area. He reported that men had said, "It would have been good if schools like this had come before. They [the parents] have sore hearts that it did not come before. That's what we were talking about in the men's' house." Oreb responded, "When Aaron and Rachel come, and you my friends [talking to the teachers] come and books keep coming, it seems like important people want to sacrifice themselves here. Then they start realising 'Oh, this is really important.'" These comments reflect the pleasure parents take in Ob Anggen, as they observe that children are really learning new skills and knowledge, foreigners are associated with the school, and material goods are flowing into the area through it.

As a result, parents are eager to do whatever they are asked to ensure the school's success. Teachers take this responsibility seriously. In one early team meeting one of the Ob Anggen teachers expressed concern about the school-parent partnership saying that he thought the parents would acquiesce to any of the teachers' requests - but "it's not right for us to ask too much from them." The other teachers agreed, though some also commented that those parents who were not contributing as much labour as others were should be challenged, as "there are plenty of parents who are really ready to support their children and the school."

### **Ob Anggen in Eragayam Tengah School Dedication**

The opening of the Ob Anggen school in Eragayam Tengah illustrates the partnership between the school and the local residents in action. The school dedication, which was planned by local church leaders, was held in a large clearing in front of the new schooling building. On the morning of the dedication, the Ob Anggen staff were in Bokondini for training. Men and women from Ikonium gathered and began preparing for the event. Some people finished clearing the weeds and began planting flowers outside the school. Others constructed a tarpaulin-covered shelter and a stage for speeches, and others still began to heat hot water to make sweet coffee. A group of men prepared the layered racks of wood which would later be set on fire to heat stones for earth ovens. Someone managed to set up a microphone for speeches which Buka Togodli used to begin yodelling to call people, adding "come quickly" (*ibver eme*) and, when groups did begin arriving with their contributions, saying "*wa wa wa wa*" (a Walak expression that acknowledges others' contributions and expresses how moved a recipient is with them). In between these calls, pop music was played through the speakers.

Meanwhile, groups of people were gathering in compounds, getting dressed up, and painting their bodies with toothpaste, ash and red clay in preparation for the event. Four men arrived carrying two live pigs on poles between them. They were soon followed by a larger group who gathered at the top of the hill above the dedication while three men herded a pig, that was too large to be carried, towards the school. Once the pig had reached the bottom, a pair of men began running back and forth

down the hill in front of their group in a synchronised dancing motion.<sup>39</sup> Behind them, the group began running down the hill, yodelling, with about twenty-five live pigs swinging by their hooves on poles carried between pairs of men, women and children within the group. Meanwhile Buka continued reciting "*wa wa wa wa...*" over the sound system. The group gathered in the centre of the clearing in a tight knit circle yodelling, while the dancers ran around the circle. After a few minutes, they then filed off towards the men in the cooking area who took over saying "*wa wa wa wa...*" Men from both the group contributing pigs and the hosts receiving them began crying and one of the hosts began a call and response song (crying and the call and response song, like the *wa wa wa wa* expression, acknowledge others' contributions and the relationship between contributors and receivers). Meanwhile, some young men constructed a rack to hang the pigs from and as the song finished and the "*wa wa wa wa*" resumed the pigs were placed on it. Other smaller groups also arrived, and a small circle of men began another crying circle, with the call and response song led by Buka over the sound system.

The large live pig that had been herded earlier had since been tied to a stake in the ground and several men now surrounded it. Using long poles they tried to get it into a suitable position so that one of them could shoot it with a large bow and arrow, which he eventually did successfully, though not without the pig charging him first. The pigs hanging on the rack were also shot one-by-one - a decidedly easier task - and their hair was then singed and scraped off over a fire. Meanwhile, a second large group arrived and presented their contributions, as the first group had. They were shortly followed by a pickup truck of guests who had been invited by Ob Anggen staff. These guests, like the Walak groups, were welcomed in a crying circle. Having made their contributions, people then went off to gather large leaves, thick grass and ferns to line the earth ovens, which they carried back on their heads as they entered the dedication area together, dancing, yodelling and singing. Meanwhile, men and boys cut and gutted the singed pigs and laid them out on a mat of leaves, with the fires heating the stones burning in the background. This brief moment for which the pigs are laid out, before being cooked and then, once again, after being cooked, is similar to that

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<sup>39</sup> This role can be performed by one or more pairs of either gender or by a mixed gender pair.

described by Heider (1970, 52) as a way of saying "to their own ghosts, in effect, 'Look what we have done for you.'" The pig intestines and stomachs were taken to the nearby stream to be cleaned. Women also arrived with net bags full of sweet potatoes and greens to contribute to the feast.

While Buka used the microphone to acknowledge the church leaders (*gembala-gembala*), village heads (*kepala desa*), administrative assistants (*apararat*) and *kepala suku* (a role for which there is no appropriate English translation, see Chapter Two) in attendance from particular areas, some people danced and sang in front of the school and others began building the earth ovens. Pits dug into the ground were lined with trodden-down leaves or ferns. People then split five or six foot branches to make large tongs and used them to carry the hot stones from the fires and layer them along the bottom of the ovens. Layers of food interspersed by more leaves and hot stones were then piled on top until the oven had been built up into a fairly large mound. Water was periodically poured over the hot stones during this process to create steam. Finally, the mound of steaming rocks, vegetables and pork was wrapped up with large leaves and bark and topped with a final few hot stones.

The official dedication service was opened by one of the church leaders. The church and government leaders who had been welcomed by Buka earlier sat on chairs under the tarpaulin and guests, including Ob Anggen staff, gathered in a semi-circle in front of the covered stage, as the event was being hosted by the local church, not by the school. The programme included a song and a drama by the Ob Anggen teachers about the importance of education.<sup>40</sup> The message of the drama was similar to that which the United Nations and the Education for All agenda promotes, namely that good schooling makes everything else - politics, economics, health and "culture" - better. The programme also included performances by the Ob Anggen schoolchildren who demonstrated some of what they had learned in school and sang songs in Walak, Indonesian and English. Most of the rest of the programme consisted of prayers, speeches by particular church leaders, and a speech by Scotty Wisley. In the middle of the event it started raining heavily, so the school was opened up and the service continued inside.

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<sup>40</sup> I participated in this drama at the teachers' request.



When the dedication service was over, the earth ovens were opened. Women made piles of the sweet potatoes and vegetables and men once again laid the cooked pork out in a line on leaves. People moved to sit in small circles, and under the supervision of the *dao kepala inombaye* (see Chapter Two, page 46), the food was distributed. Boys, young men and a handful of women placed portions of food on a mat of leaves in the middle of each of the circles as someone called "wa wa wa wa..." over the microphone. People ate together and socialised and the evening ended with singing and dancing which continued until after dark.

### **Pictures from the Ob Anggen School Dedication Ceremony, January 2014**



*The dedication sign prepared by Walak leaders reads (in Indonesian): "Theme: Prepare Leaders for the Future Who Fear God. Sub Theme: Through Education, Prepare Leaders Who Fear God to Face the Era of Globalisation (Proverbs 1:7a)"*





*Men prepare the fire to heat stones for the earth ovens*



*Women pose having led the presentation of pigs from their relatives with dancing*





*Men and boys carry the pigs they have presented over to the rack*



*Men stand in a group facing the school in front of the pigs they have contributed*





***A man treads down the leaves that form the bottom layer of an earth oven***



***Children sit on the outskirts of a circle of men talking before the dedication***





*Part of the dedication ceremony, which included speeches and performances*



*Men lay out the cooked pigs ready for dividing up amongst the dedication guests*





***Women sit around one of the outdoor earth ovens as the cooked food is divided up***



***A group of young men tuck in to their group's allocation of tubers and vegetables***

Sources for pictures: various, including L. Gomenak, M. Karobanak, A. Shah and R. Shah

## Conclusion

Although Ob Anggen is a mission school, there are many aspects of its vision and values which resonate with those enshrined in international development targets and promoted by powerful organisations such as UNICEF and USAID. Ob Anggen does not apply a rights or a capabilities framework to its activities, but its schools do manifest many liberal democratic values. For example, Ob Anggen promotes inclusivity in gender, disability, ethnicity and religion, even when this proves to be unpopular locally. Ob Anggen also relates schooling to wider development issues, like health, poverty and community empowerment, and uses a strengths-based partnership approach to actively involve parents in their children's schooling. In the classroom, Ob Anggen teachers focus on providing a "quality education," to use the language of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2016c). This means that the education they provide includes literacy, numeracy and technological literacy, and that it promotes ongoing equality of opportunity in relation to accessing the benefits of schooling, such as the international education market, the national job market and various leadership positions. Ob Anggen is also similar to liberal democratic perspectives in that it tries to adapt to and value diversity as long as that diversity does not violate moral principles held to be universal. Thus, Ob Anggen has used contextualised curriculum materials, incorporates local materials and traditions into some lessons, and situates itself as embedded within the local community and subject to local accountability and practices, as illustrated by the Eragayam Tengah school dedication event. The values of equality, personal freedom and agency, and personal responsibility are evident in many Ob Anggen policies.

There are some significant ways in which Ob Anggen departs from liberal democratic values though. Most importantly, although both value diversity constrained by universal moral principles, in Ob Anggen those principles are defined in Christian terms whereas in international development they are defined in secular humanist terms. Parents have to pay for schooling in Ob Anggen, whereas the international development targets call for free, compulsory schooling for all children. Ob Anggen is also run in the local Indonesian and English, whereas the use of the vernacular in the first few years of early education is widely promoted in education

and international development (though it is worth noting that Ob Anggen's failure to use the vernacular in school is partly due to a lack of resources).

Overall, Ob Anggen is well respected within the international development and education landscape in Papua. A report by ACDP (2014, 66, 81) cites Ob Anggen as having received "high praise" and being an example of "good practice aligned closely to the principles outlined [in the ACDP report]." SERASI (International Relief and Development, 2013, 53) praises Ob Anggen for preparing students "to thrive in a globalized world, without separating them from their cultural roots" and quotes the Provincial Head of Education as saying, "We don't even have other institutions to compare [Ob Anggen] to."

Ob Anggen does not claim that schooling is self-evidently valuable. Rather, the Ob Anggen staff view schooling as necessary to equip the next generation of Papuans to participate in a rapidly changing and increasingly interconnected world. The purpose of this schooling is to provide access to foreign skills and knowledge which will enable students to become leaders on local, provincial, national and international scales, and to do so in a way that does not undermine their kin relationships. Ob Anggen also situates this education within the framework of Christian values and beliefs, which staff hope the children will adopt for themselves and use as a moral framework in the future. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, this is a very different model of education from the indigenous education that Walak children participate in outside of school.



# Chapter Six: Indigenous Education

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Having examined the vision, values and purposes which inform education within Ob Anggen school, I turn in this chapter to analysing children's learning outside of school. In Chapter Two, I gave an overview of what children learn outside of school and how they learn it. I situated this learning within the wider context of subsistence and social arrangements, pointing out the gender division of activities and the values of egalitarianism, autonomy and reciprocity that Walak people hold. I also argued that social, supernatural, and economic activities are not compartmentalised, that beliefs about the supernatural inform many daily activities and that Walak people value social relationships and their associated obligations highly. In this chapter, I explore these values and features of Walak life in children's activities, looking at their effect on how children are treated at different ages and at their emergence in children's behaviour. I examine how children who do not attend school learn skills, concepts and values.

I do this by analysing the detailed qualitative data I collected through participant observation and through shadowing two girls in each of eight age categories between birth and approximately fifteen years, supporting my argument through excerpts from my shadow day notes. For each age category, I use these excerpts (which are marked by italics) to give examples of how children learn, and how Walak values and concepts affect children's activities and interactions at that age. The excerpts show an interplay between the value of autonomy which Walak people hold and the obligations which children are increasingly pressured to adopt as they grow older. They show how children of different ages are taught and persuaded, as well as how children actively resist the pressure others put on them and how they shape their learning for themselves. The excerpts also show the ways in which gender comes increasingly to bear on children's activities, highlighting the emergence of gender roles in children's activities.

This chapter focuses on girls' activities as I was only able to shadow girls (see Chapter Three), but I have made comments on and contrasts with boys' activities

where possible. In the excerpts of my shadow day notes, a horizontal line indicates a time gap between observations of the focal child.

## **Children Age 0-1**

Children change rapidly in their actual and perceived physical competencies in the first two years of their lives, so the 0-1 age category includes a wide range of behaviours and interactions, ranging from newborns' total dependence on those who care for them through to toddlers whose interactions show early signs of their autonomy.<sup>41</sup> The girls who I shadowed in the 0-1 age category were two months old and seven months old, so the data from my observations of them provide most insight into how Walak people teach and interact with children under one, and how this is affected by Walak values. The examples of Hul (age 1 - he appears in the shadow day with Kiyn below) and Yaeb (also age 1 - she appears in the shadow day with Twaen below) show how slightly older children in this age category have a greater degree of independence from their mothers and are less immediately indulged than babies are.

### **Sabiy Gombo**

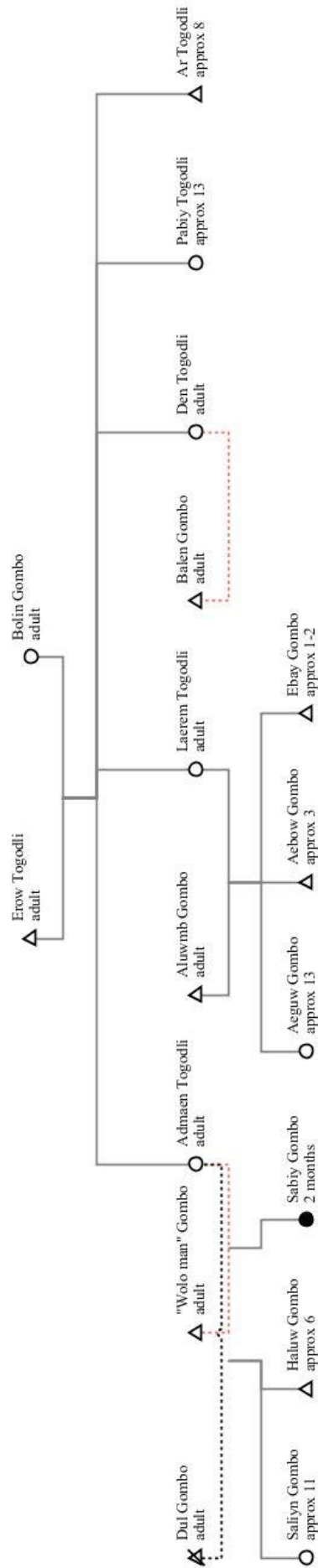
Sabiy Gombo was a two month old baby at the time of the shadow day I did with her. She is the third child of Admaen Togodli (see genealogy on page 164). Admaen's first two children - a girl, Saliyn, aged about eleven and a boy, Haluw, aged about six - were born to Admaen's first husband, Dul Gombo, who died. Sabiy is the daughter of Admaen's second husband, a man from the Wolo area. Admaen moved to live with him but had since moved back in with her parents following a dispute over unpaid bridewealth.

*When I arrive at about 9:00 to their cooking house, Sabiy is feeding. The others present in addition to Sabiy, Admaen, Saliyn, Haluw and myself are Pabiy (a girl aged about 13), Ar (a boy aged about 8), Bolin, Laerem (both adult women), Erow and Haebon Togodli (both adult men - Haebon is Erow's brother's son).<sup>42</sup>*

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<sup>41</sup> The terms "baby," "toddler" and "teenager" are not equivalent to any Walak age categories (see Chapter Two) and I am not using them as analytical categories here. I use them only to make my writing more easily comprehensible to the English-speaking reader.

<sup>42</sup> These people's relationships to each other are shown by the genealogy on page 164.



*Partial genealogy for Sabiy Gombo*

**Legend for Unions**

marriage

separation or divorce

marriage ended due to death

*Sabiy falls asleep after nursing and sleeps till she wets herself when she awakes with a slight cry, at 9:40. Admaen takes off Sabiy's trousers and feeds her, talking to Sabiy in baby talk, and then, after finishing the feed at 9:53, dresses her in clean trousers. Throughout this time, the rest of us sit around the fire talking.*

*At 10:19 Admaen gives Sabiy, who has been awake but not crying for the last half hour, to her grandmother who rocks her saying "Tss, tss, tss..." A little later, Sabiy wets herself again and Saliyn, who is holding her now says to her "You're wrong. You shouldn't urinate randomly, or I'll hit you" all the while smiling at her. About five minutes later Sabiy cries slightly, and gets handed back to Admaen who nurses her again. The rest of us continue talking.*



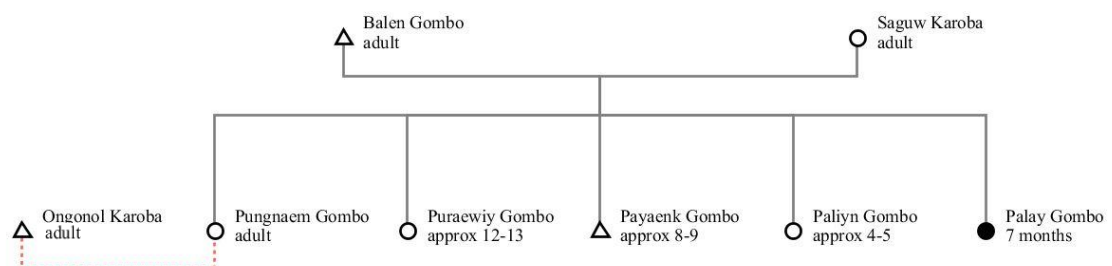
**Admaen Togodli with her daughter Sabiy Gombo on the grass outside their cooking house**

We have gone to the gardens now. It is 13:20 and Sabiy is crying. Den (another adult sister of Admaen) starts carrying Sabiy around in a net bag on her head and she stops crying almost immediately. Aebow (approximately 3 years old) is with his father, who is cutting grass. His mother, Laerem is chatting to her sister Admaen while they harvest sweet potatoes.

By 13:30 Sabiy is asleep again and Den carries her back towards the group. Aebow comes over to speak to his mother, who responds "get away." He copies her as she harvests and she does not instruct him, except to make a disparaging noise. He is digging with a stick and singing to himself; he does not actually find any sweet potatoes in the mounds. Only Den is watching him; everyone else is ignoring him. Den says "Help your mother!" and gives him a little input. He keeps going, copying his mother, and looking to Den for affirmation. His mother responds, saying "You know how to do it, do you?" (implying that he does not) and then repeats her admonition to "get away!" A little later, she says "help your father!" and Admaen backs her up, saying "boys should help their fathers." He nonetheless persists with the digging stick, prompting Den to tease "Aebow is like a girl!" and his mother, Laerem, to exclaim "Stubborn!"

It's 13:40 and Sabiy is crying again. She is immediately taken for a walk. Meanwhile, I hear my name being mentioned to Aebow, presumably as another attempt to persuade him to leave them alone and help his father. Eventually, at about 13:50 he walks off to join his father. At 13:53 Sabiy wakes up and Den calls Admaen, who comes and nurses her.

## Palay Gombo



**Partial genealogy for Palay Gombo**

*Palay Gombo was a seven month old baby at the time of the shadow day. I arrive to her mother's cooking house at about 8:00 where Mobowaem Gombo (age 6-7), who lives in the same compound, is holding Palay. Palay's sister Paliyn (age 4-5) is also present. When I arrive, Paliyn goes to get her mother, Saguw Karoba, who comes in and starts feeding Palay while putting trousers on her. Palay knows her name, and grins when her mother says it. Whilst feeding Palay, Saguw starts preparing vegetables to feed pigs and talks to me and to Mobowaem's mother Tiybaen Karoba about the vote (for the Indonesian legislative elections) that is happening in Ikonium today (it will be held outdoors in the church compound, centred around a temporary structure that has been constructed between the church building and my house).*

*Palay has finished feeding and is laughing, bouncing up and down, and smiling. She is handed back to Mobowaem, and Palay tries to grab the maize cob that Mobowaem is eating, while Paliyn whistles in Palay's face. Palay gets the maize, and Mobowaem carries her around, balancing her on her knees and against the side of the cooking house wall until her mother takes her back.*

*Saguw plays with Palay, lifting her in the air, grinning, shaking her gently, lifting her up and putting her down, making noises, and pretending to eat her arm. Both she and Palay are smiling broadly.*

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*Saguw offers Palay her breast, but Palay refuses it and Saguw puts it away and goes back to playing with Palay, jumping her up and down. Whatever Palay says, her mother repeats back to her.*

---

*Palay is sitting on a sheet on the grass floor of the cooking house and Paliyn is swinging some scissors around her. Paliyn then tries to cut Palay's hair with the scissors and very nearly catches Palay's fingers in the scissors which Saguw does not appear to notice. Saguw wants to feed the pigs and puts Palay into Paliyn's arms; Paliyn walks around with her.*





***Paliyn carrying Palay around the cooking house***

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*Suddenly Palay starts crying and Saguw immediately offers her the breast, which she rejects. Now she is showing Paliyn to Palay and Palay is beginning to stop crying, and grabbing for Saguw's necklace again. Saguw starts swinging her around, making noises and then offering her milk again. Palay begins nursing this time.*

*Palay wets herself and Saguw asks Paliyn to pass her a nappy, handing the wet trousers to Paliyn who throws them outside. Saguw tells her off lightly for this and carries on tying the nappy - a single piece of cloth - around Palay. Palay is saying "wa wa wa" (which echoes a Walak lullaby) and Saguw is saying "Tabuni, Tabuni..."*

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*We are now sitting in my cooking house drinking tea and coffee while the election goes on outside. Palay has been asleep, but she has just woken up and is sitting on her mother Saguw's lap, staring at the group. There are nine people in the*

*cooking house in addition to my husband, Palay, Saguw and myself. Palay starts feeding, but is not concentrating much. She keeps looking at me.*

*I have run out of hot water and more people have come in, so the children in the cooking house have been told to divide their drinks equally into the empty cups and one of them, who is about 4 or 5 years old, is holding them up to the light to make sure he has divided them equally.*

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*Paliyn calls Saguw to go and vote, and Saguw leaves Palay with a young girl. Palay sits on the girl's lap looking around her, watching as the parents in the cooking house share out what is left of the coffee and the children's food that they brought in with them.*

---

Babies are too young to be described as autonomous. Their desires are usually indulged, where they are discernible and it is feasible, and feeding babies on demand, as these two mothers did, is the norm. Babies are given far more attention than children who are just a few years older than them - Aebow (age 2-3) and Paliyn (age 4-5), for example, are told to "get away!" and are left to their own devices at various points, whereas the babies are cooed over, played with and attended to as soon as they show any signs of being upset.

Babies' day-to-day experiences are shaped primarily by their mother, whom they accompany wherever they go, and by other adult women and older children who look after them when their mother is occupied (as, for example, with gardening in Admaen's case and with feeding the pigs in Saguw's case). As the excerpts illustrate, babies are continually passed between people (often girls and women, but sometimes boys and men too). In the short span of time covered by these excerpts, Palay was held by her mother, her sister, Mobowaem and another young girl, and Sabiy was held or carried by her mother, her sister, her maternal grandmother and her mother's sister. Babies' mothers are never far away, though, and will always indulge a baby's wish to return to them. Mothers are also regularly given their babies back for nursing, as Admaen was.



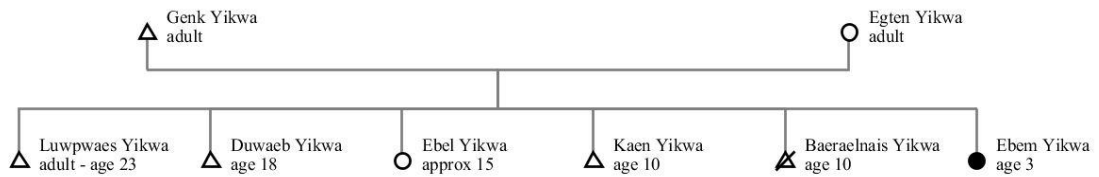
Babies are present at discussions of all sorts. In the above excerpts, Palay heard several conversations about the voting including some about a dispute over who was allowed to vote, and Sabiy was held quietly while her family sat around the fire talking. Palay heard other children in my cooking house being told to share out their coffee when there was not enough hot water to go around and watched a young boy carefully ensure that each coffee cup had an equal serving. She also saw parents share their children's food with others. Palay and Sabiy are young, but such exposure to reciprocity and equality constitutes embryonic learning of Walak values.

Babies do not engage in any activities other than sleeping, crying, resting, being played with, and being fed, so it does not make much sense to consider whether characteristics of Walak adults' activities are observable in their activities. However, the high value that Walak people put on acknowledging their relationships is observable both in the degree to which babies are passed around and cared for by multiple relatives, and in the way people interact with babies. Children's education about social relationships begins young - perhaps the most frequent directive given to babies is to call someone by the appropriate term denoting their relationship. For example, with slightly older babies and young toddlers, it is typical for a mother to repeat the kinship term the child will eventually use for someone when greeting that person, if they pass on a path. When Palay was looking at her mother and saying, "*wa, wa, wa*" Saguw responded, "Tabuni, Tabuni" - the name I was called by locally. This is an example of a mother beginning to teach her young child the terms of address she needs to know. At another point, Palay was smiling at her father and Saguw repeated "*bapa*" to her in a baby voice ("*bapa*" is the local Indonesian word for "dad" and has been incorporated into Walak use). Though children may not know how or through whom they are related, they soon learn what type of relationships they have with other people, which lays the foundation for learning what privileges and obligations are associated with these relationships. They also quickly learn how to address others according to these relationships.

I know of no difference, at this young age, between how baby boys and baby girls spend their time.

## Children Age 2-3

### Ebem Yikwa



#### ***Partial genealogy for Ebem Yikwa***

*It's 8:30 and Ebem Yikwa (who is three years and four months old according to the birth dates written in the front of her father's Bible), her mother Egten Karoba and I are at the market. Egten has displayed vegetables to sell and Ebem is making quiet crying noises, trying to lift her mother's shirt up, trying to get her breast out, putting it away again, pulling her mother's nipple, sucking on it for a second, then putting it away again, then sucking on it again and so on repeatedly. Her mother is talking to her really quietly saying "I haven't got any money." Horshiyow Gombo, our close neighbour from Ikonium (see page 180 for genealogy), who is sitting nearby and has been talking to Egten says to Ebem, "Look, we're trying to sell vegetables." Ebem does not respond to Horshiyow but her mother does.*

*Ebem is still going for the breast and her mother is resisting now, lightly whacking her head and saying something about Ebem going with Kaen (her brother, age 10-11), which Ebem responds to by crying. Egten offers her baked sweet potato but she does not want it and she starts to moan and cry more. Egten then gets some money out and gives it to Ebem.*

---

*We are still at the market. Ebem has bought two bundles of groundnuts with the money Egten gave her and as she walks back towards us, she is grinning. She puts one bundle of nuts in the bag and starts to eat the other, to which Horshiyow says "Oh, share with us, share with us." Ebem is not sharing and Horshiyow is getting angry at her, saying "Ah! share it! Share it!" I had earlier given Ebem some noodles and she is now getting told off for not reciprocating by sharing her nuts with me. So far she has*

*put one bundle in her lap and has not shared any with anyone. Her mother tries to sneak some out of her lap to give to me but she guards them. Horshiyow and Egten both tell her off for that, but do not try to force her to share.*



***Ebem enjoying her nuts***

*Not much later, someone comes over, shakes our hands and says to Ebem, "Oh, you're eating nuts." This draws everyone's attention to the situation again. Egten again tries to persuade Ebem to share the nuts with me, and both Egten and Horshiyow tell her off once more. She now gives in reluctantly to the pressure and gives her mother a few nuts to give to me. Everyone is still cross at her because she is not doing the right thing.*

*Egten takes some nuts from the second bundle in her bag to add to the meagre amount Ebem has conceded to share and I take them and offer them to Horshiyow as well, who declines to take any. Ebem is not interacting; she is just staring and eating nuts. Horshiyow then turns to Ebem and asks her for some nuts for herself. Ebem again resists but eventually lets her take three or four to which Horshiyow warmly responds "Ehhhhh, nogar...." ("my friend/relative") and gives her an affectionate pinch.*

---

*We are all walking up the hill together now. Ebem has finished her first bundle of nuts and has started eating the second one, which her mother briefly resisted but has now given in to. As we walk, her mother says to her "some of those are for Kaen" (Ebem's brother) and Ganonk Togodli, an older woman who is also a close neighbour from Ikonium who has joined us, asks her "Can I have one?" After a lot of fuss Ebem gives a single nut to her for which she again gets a warm "waaaa nogar" ("thank you my friend/relative").*

---

*At the top of the hill, we sit resting under a tree and Pet Gombo (an adult man who lives in Gabeldoma) joins us. We all sit around discussing the political campaigns and upcoming election. Pet asks Ebem for a nut and they joke with each other. She gives him literally one, smiling, and he responds by teasing her. Her mother takes the opportunity to continue telling her that she should do the right thing by sharing.*

---

*It is later in the day and we are at one of the political party's rallies with several hundred other people. Ebem has managed to get hold of the nuts again and is once again being asked to share them. She reluctantly shares one or two each with a couple of the women. Her mother has walked off now and Ebem walks over to a boy who is younger than her and actually offers him some nuts!*

---

*Ebem has run off on her own. I am with Ebel (her sister, age 14-15) and their mother who both say to each other "I thought she was with you." Neither seems*

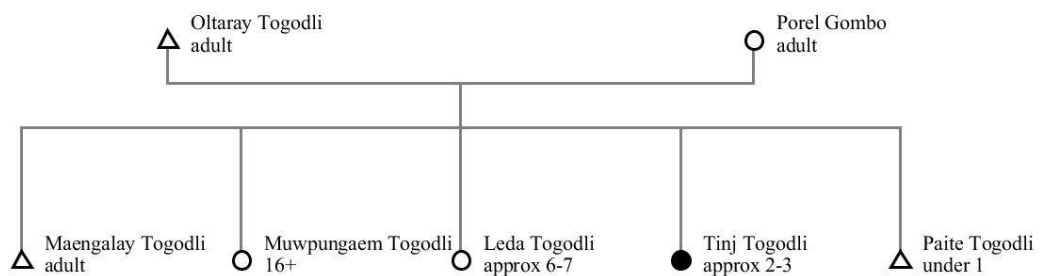


*distressed, but Ebel goes off to look for Ebem and finds her with another family. She brings her back to her mother and leaves her, but it is not much longer before Ebem runs off again. It becomes nearly impossible to keep track of her in such a large space with so many people present.*



***Part of the political rally; yellow is the colour representing the party hosting the rally***

### **Tinj Togodli**



***Partial genealogy for Tinj Togodli***

*Tinj Togodli is also in the 2-3 year old age category, but unlike Ebem she is not the youngest in her family anymore as her mother, Porel Gombo, has recently given*

*birth to a baby boy. We arrive in the gardens and Tinj's mother puts the clothes she washed earlier out to dry, then finds a stake with a fork in it and rams it into the ground. She hangs the baby who is sleeping inside two net bags on this fork. Porel puts a cloth underneath and a blanket and an extra net bag on top, then walks away to begin harvesting vegetables. She tells Tinj and me to sit in the shade, which we do. Tinj plays with my things, my hair and with the doman (a type of cicada) that her mother caught for her when we were walking in the forest earlier. She then climbs a tree, shouts to her mother and tries to look at her baby brother inside the net bags. She subsequently plays at harvesting some leaves.*

---



***Tinj and me (outside my house on a different day from the shadow day)***

---

*We are walking home and Porel is teaching Tinj what to say in different circumstances. When I give her some food, Porel says "Say thank you" and when Tinj*

*trips over, she says "Ooooh my friend," and I add "Ooooh poor you." She says to Tinj, "Oh your friend says 'poor you,' you say 'Yeeeah.'"*

---

*Back in her mother's sleeping house, Tinj walks over to pay attention to the baby, whom Porel is holding. She gets really close to him, touching his hand, and Porel says "get away" in a strict tone to which Tinj responds "ah!" - a noise made to express resistance and disapproval. She gets right in the baby's face and her mother pushes her back quite forcefully on her head to give him a bit of space. After a moment more of resistance, Tinj gives up and wanders outside on her own, playing with bits of grass for a bit before wandering over to the neighbouring compound.*

---

*Tinj has come back to the sleeping house and Porel is cooking the cicada for Tinj. She offers it to me and I say that I do not want any. Tinj is touching the baby's face and talking to him and Porel says "Stay away from him!"*

*Porel puts the cicada in the fire, rubs it between her hands to get rid of the wings and legs, and then gives it to Tinj who takes its head off and eats the head.*

*Tinj keeps offering it to me and when I say I do not want it she pretends to throw it in the fire. Playing along, I say "Where is it?" and she says "There, in the fire" though she is actually hiding it behind her back. She then eats it all.*

---

*Tinj's mother gets angry at Tinj for something she has done, tells her off and gives her a whack. Tinj starts crying and her mother comforts her saying "Oh, poor you, my sweet, my sweet..." until she eventually stops crying.*

---

*We are all at a funeral now and Tinj is playing - lying in the grass with Wen Karoba (also age 2-3) and then rolling down the hill repeatedly. Every now and then she comes over to her mother and the group of other women from our area, but no one is paying her or the other children much attention.*

---





***Tinj in her mother's (and her) sleeping house, playing with my voice recorder***

---

Tinj, Ebem and Aebow (from the shadow day with Sabiy, above) are all approximately 2-3 years old, an age at which children begin to face the reality that their every whim will no longer be indulged. Adults do still give children of this age what they want most of the time, especially if they cry, but resistance from adults is also visible and when there are younger babies around, those babies' needs are prioritised over the 2-3 year old's needs. For example, Tinj's mother is both firm and consistent about Tinj not getting too close to her baby brother, and although Tinj pushes back, in the particular confrontation described above it is Tinj who gives in, not her mother. When Tinj gets told off and starts crying, though, her mother stops telling



her off and starts comforting her. Ebem is likewise successful, through whimpering, in getting the money her mother claimed she did not have. Ebem's mother also allows her to suck on and pull at her breast for quite a while, but eventually she stops her (whereas she would not have stopped a baby). Children of this age begin to get the chance to practice their autonomy but they also discover that they are expected to consider other people's needs.

At this age, children are expected to begin recognising their social obligations, which they are explicitly taught should inform their actions. One of these obligations is to the needs of children younger than themselves, which they are expected to prioritise over their own desires. Just as adults frequently give in to 2-3 year olds on account of their age, so too 2-3 year olds are expected to indulge younger children. A second social obligation 2-3 year olds are expected to begin learning is to respond to other people appropriately. This includes acknowledging others according to their relationships (building on the learning of 0-1 year olds) and responding properly to particular social situations, as exemplified by Tinj's mother telling her how to acknowledge the food I gave her, and how to acknowledge the exclamation I made when she tripped. A third social obligation that children of this age are taught to recognise is to practice reciprocity and sharing. As soon as Ebem began eating her nuts, Horshiyow asked her to share them. This was to be the first of many such requests. Indeed, all the adults who interact with Ebem while she is eating nuts join in the campaign to pressure her to share them, using a variety of strategies including relentlessly asking, instructing, cajoling, teasing, persuading and getting angry at her. They frame their requests both in terms of the intrinsic need to share (such as "Share it! Share it!" and "Some of those are for Kaen, your brother...") and in terms of the value of reciprocity (such as pointing out that I had given her dried noodles and she should therefore give me nuts). Every new situation where Ebem eats nuts prompts a new request to share those nuts. When she does share, even though this is begrudgingly, the adults respond affectionately, as they would if a peer had spontaneously shared food with them. They model normal social responses to Ebem as well as encouraging her to continue making the choice to share and to reciprocate. Towards the end of the day, Ebem does spontaneously share her nuts with a younger

boy, and Tinj, who is of a similar age, also spontaneously offers to share her cooked cicada with me. These are small examples of these two young girls engaging in the act of sharing that the adults around them are trying so earnestly to instil in them.

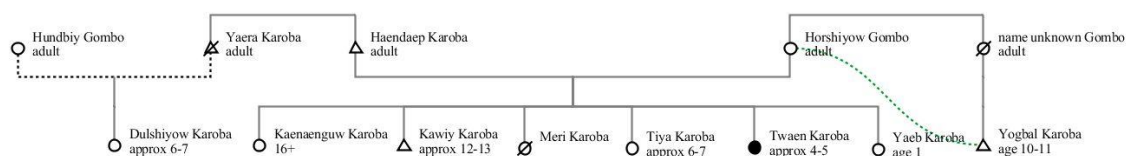
When it comes to subsistence activities, children of this age are not yet expected to make a contribution. In fact, when Aebow picked up a digging stick his mother mockingly asked "You know how to do it, do you?" It seemed to me that when parents had subsistence activities to get on with, they mostly wanted children of this age to stay out of the way. They would leave them with older siblings, with relatives or with me when they had a chance to do so. For example, Tinj's mother left Tinj with me while she was gardening, Ebem's mother left Ebem with Ebel when she had cooking to do, and on another shadow day (see pages 195-196), Wen's mother left Wen (also age 2-3) with her sister Wenya (age 6-7). I believe this, rather than an aversion to a male toddler's participation in a female activity, was the primary motivation for Aebow's mother and aunts rounding on him gardening and telling him that he should go and "help" his father. After all, not long before, Den had been telling Aebow that he should help his mother. Whatever the motivation, though, it is an early sign of the gender division of activities and its effect was that, having eventually been persuaded to join his father, Aebow spent more of his time in the gardens exposed to (and therefore learning) male activities than female ones.

The extension of Walak people's value of autonomy towards children is already evident at this age. For example, although all the adults strongly disapproved of Ebem's resistance to sharing her nuts, they did not try to force her to obey their urgings. The distinction between force and persistent attempts at persuasion is important because it signifies an underlying belief that Ebem, like all people, is an autonomous actor who is free to make her own decisions, just as other autonomous actors are free to mount a campaign of pressure on her to make decisions that they consider proper. The same attitude is present in Aebow's interactions. No one tried to take the digging stick out of his hand, or lifted him up and took him to his father. Instead they teased and mocked him, until he wandered over to join his father. Ebem's and Tinj's freedom to wander off on their own, even at large scale events, is also a sign of their autonomy.

Although children of this age are not expected to make a contribution to subsistence activities, they do learn skills through their play and observation. Both Tinj and Aebow play, of their own initiative, in ways that imitate their parents' productive activities. Aebow picks up a digging stick and starts trying to join in harvesting, and Tinj plays at harvesting leaves. Tinj is also fascinated by babies and although she is too young to do childcare, she does spend a lot of time hovering around babies - an activity which will likely result in babies being left with her to look after when she is older (as Palay was left with Paliyn, above, while her mother fed the pigs). All children of this age also spend a lot of time entertaining themselves in ways that are not and never will be productive, such as Tinj spending some of her time at the funeral with Wen, repeatedly rolling down a small hill.

## Children Age 4-5

### Twaen Karoba



#### *Partial genealogy for Twaen Karoba*

The dotted green line represents adoption. Yogbal Karoba also sometimes lives with his maternal grandparents. The dotted black line represents a marriage that ended due to death.

*Twaen Karoba (age 4-5) has gone over to sit by her mother, Horshiyow Gombo, in the shade of their sleeping house where Horshiyow is breastfeeding Yaeb (age 1 year and 2 months). Horshiyow wants Twaen to go up to another compound nearby and says "off you go, off you go" while smiling. Twaen stays with her mum who responds "nair" ("I don't want this") but who is also still half-laughing. Twaen starts fake crying and continues saying that she does not want to go. Horshiyow relents and instead tries to put Yaeb on Twaen's back. Twaen's father who is out of sight, is calling her. Twaen wipes her tears with a grumpy face and holds Yaeb on her back, while her mother goes to the cooking house to get whatever it was that Twaen's father was calling Twaen to bring.*



***Twaen playing with a dog in her compound***

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Yaeb is making little noises and then starts crying. Twaen is trying to carry her and rock her but Yaeb is big, relative to Twaen, so it is hard. She carries Yaeb on her back again and that seems to work. Twaen tries to sit down next to me and Dulshiyow, who is also in the compound, but Yaeb starts crying again so she stands up again.

*Twaen's mother and father have both gone into the garden that borders the compound and Twaen and her mother are calling back and forth to each other.*

*Twaen is getting upset now because she cannot sit down without Yaeb starting to cry. Twaen tries once again to sit down and Yaeb screams. Twaen tries putting her on her lap, hugging her, but it does not work and their mother is coming over now, saying "Yo, yo, yo..." - a comforting noise intended to soothe Yaeb.*

---

*Horshiyow is telling Twaen to wash the dishes. Twaen initially responds by saying "Ah!" to express resistance and disapproval, but immediately follows up by*

*asking what she should wash. Dulshiyow goes over to help but Horshiyow calls Dulshiyow back to get soap, saying "do it with soap," and Twaen calls out "Do it with soap?" to which Horshiyow replies affirmatively.*

*[Later] I notice that they have not done all the dishes and ask if they are going to do the remaining pots. Dulshiyow responds that they do not want to.*

---

*We have been sitting on a mat outside in the compound, but Twaen and Dulshiyow have wandered off now to collect marivbe engar (a type of edible leaf) from behind the fence. They are also collecting minggu (a type of herb) and eating some of it raw. Twaen is collecting the leaves she does not eat in the same way that the adult women do, lined up in a pile in her hand, ready to tie into a bundle. Dulshiyow gives the rest of what she finds to Twaen to add to the bundle.*

---

*Yaeb is blowing a whistle and sitting in her mother's arms. Horshiyow is telling Yaeb to "stay with your older sister" and Twaen and Dulshiyow are saying "come" to her and trying to convince Yaeb to let Twaen hold her. Horshiyow wants to go back and work in the garden.*

*We sit on the step of the sleeping house, talking occasionally. Every now and then Horshiyow tries to give Yaeb to Twaen or Dulshiyow again, but Yaeb repeatedly says "I don't want to!"*

*After a while Horshiyow does get up and leave Yaeb sitting inside the sleeping house on the dry grass. Twaen and Dulshiyow are just outside (the door is open), and Yaeb is eating bits of dry grass. Twaen then gets up and leaves too. Yaeb throws the whistle out the door and leans over the edge of the doorway to look. Twaen heads to a different section of the garden than the ones her parents are in, and joins them weeding.*

---

*Twaen and I are in the cooking house now eating sugar cane. Horshiyow comes in to cook pandanus fruit. She tells Twaen to go and get water to which Twaen*

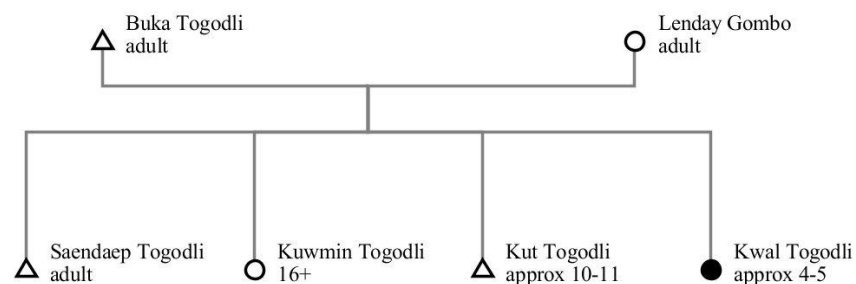
*responds "a lot of water?" Twaen chases chickens out of the cooking house and covers up a pile of sweet potatoes with a lid so they cannot peck at the rest of them. I hand Twaen the rest of my sugar cane and she takes it, to which her mum says "Say thank you, stupid!" Twaen does not respond but gets up and goes to get the water with Dulshiyow.*

*A few minutes later Dulshiyow comes back with the water. Twaen, apparently, is washing the rest of the dishes. When she comes back Horshiyow has made a fire and is boiling pandanus fruit. Twaen is watching, talking to her mother and cooking a maize cob. Her mother suddenly notices how she is cooking the maize and exclaims loudly, telling her that she is doing it wrong. She takes the cob from her and shows her how to do it, explaining as she demonstrates. She hits Twaen gently on the head saying "not that way" and adding "put it in these tongs and then put it in there," then blows the fire. Twaen does not respond except to get out of the way of the resulting smoke.*

---

*Twaen is playing with a wheel and singing a song she learned from the Ob Anggen school pupils. She runs over to her father who has finished gardening now. He jumps out of the way and says "Oh you're going to crash into me!" She laughs and runs after him again. "Is it a bike?" he asks her playfully before wandering off.*

### **Kwal Togodli**



#### ***Partial genealogy for Kwal Togodli***

*Kwal Togodli (age 4-5) is playing in the cooking house with a kitten while her mother, Lenday Gombo gets ready to go out. Two men walk past the house, one of whom is Kwal's ombaye. Lenday says "Kwal, greet your ombaye" and then gives a large cooked sweet potato to him before the men go on their way.*



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*Kwal, her mother and I have gone to Kindun where a political rally is going to be held that day, which will include outdoor earth oven cooking, dancing, speeches and a visit from a politician who originally comes from the area. Lenday drops Kwal off at a relative's house in Kindun and then goes to the gardens to harvest sweet potatoes for the event.*

*Kwal has been left with Izuwm Gombo and his two daughters Koten (age 4-5) and Konem (age 0-1). Izuwm is holding Konem and talking to me. He asks Kwal and Koten to get some firewood, which they do until he says "Enough, enough, thank you very much" at which point they run outside.*

---



***Kwal lying on Kuwmin's lap with Koten sitting beside them***

*Kwal's teenage sister Kuwmin, who attends school in town, has turned up for the event, which Kwal is delighted about. In fact, Kwal barely leaves Kuwmin's side for the rest of the day. Kuwmin gives some sweets from town to Kwal and together they go*

*back over to Izuwm's house. Kwal is sharing her sweets with Koten and says to her sister "I gave one to Koten." Her sister answers "That's exactly right."*

*Kwal had to squeeze past me to get through into Izuwm's house. "Say excuse me," Kuwmin admonished her. Izuwm is bathing Konem and the rest of us sit around. Kwal is sitting on Kuwmin's lap now and keeps asking her "what is that?" about things she can see, such as a book and a piece of paper.*

*Kwal is now lying down on Kuwmin's lap and playing with Koten by hiding her eyes, then revealing them. She goes back and forth between playing with Koten on the mat and sitting on her sister's lap facing her sister. After a while her sister says "get off my lap, my legs hurt" but Kwal says "no, I don't want to" and stays where she is.*

---

*Someone has brought biscuits from town which Kwal was very reluctant to share, but Kuwmin told her "you have to share, you have to share" and instructed her to hand them out one-by-one to other people in the room, which Kwal then did.*



***Kwal holding the crumbs in the biscuit packet while women dance in the background***



---

*Someone asked Kwal what happened to her feet and legs. They were badly infected and I had cleaned and bandaged them for her earlier, so she said "Rachel did this." The woman then responded, "Oh Rachel, Tabuni, your friend/relative, Tabuni. She is our friend/relative, I'm Tabuni too." The emphasis was on the fact that Kwal, myself and the woman talking were all of the Togodli family, called Tabuni (see Chapter Two), and therefore related.*

---

*We have gone back over to Izuwm's house now and Lenday is opening her bag to give Kut (age 10-11) some food from the earth oven. Kwal is asking for more chicken. When she does not get given it, she starts crying and her mother gives it to her after all.*

*Kwal then asks Kut to hold her chicken for her and goes to get a drink. Kut says "come quickly Kwal" and I add "go quickly, he is holding your chicken." Jokingly, he says "I'm just going to eat a bit" to which she says "ah!" disapprovingly, but she does then given him a tiny piece. Kut then looks at Kwal, suggesting with his eye expressions that she should give him some more. She pulls a bit off for him, which he accepts, though it is still not as much as half.*

---

Kwal, Twaen and other children in the 4-5 age range spend most of their time playing, being idle or otherwise amusing themselves, but it is in this age range that children begin to be explicitly asked to make productive contributions to household activities. For example, Twaen was told by her mother to take and watch Yaeb, to wash the dishes and to go and get water when her mother was cooking pandanus fruit. Kwal and Koten were also asked by Izuwm to get firewood. This is more of an attempt by adults to make the most of having an extra pair of hands around than it is a deliberate commitment to train children in those activities. Nonetheless, children do learn as a consequence, both through practice and through being corrected when they do a task wrong, such as when Twaen's mother taught Twaen how to cook maize properly by showing her how to do it correctly.

Children of this age also initiate their own productive activities, even if on a small scale. For example, at one point in the day Twaen laid out blankets in the sun to look for fleas to squash, which saved her mother doing it later. She also, of her own initiative, joined her parents weeding, which her mother affirmed affectionately. She and Dulshiyow decided at another point to amuse themselves by collecting *marivbe engar* and *mingga* from the bushes which resulted in a small edible harvest. Twaen imitated the adult women she had seen and collected these edible plants into a small bundle just like adult women make when harvesting leaves in their gardens.

Children of this age, as the excerpts above show, can be cared for by either men or women, though they are more like to accompany their mothers than anyone else. In Ikonium, the number of girls of this age was nearly double the number of boys of this age so my data for this age group are particularly skewed towards girls' activities. However, I would argue that at this age, the gender of a child is not yet much of a deciding factor in how she or he spends her or his time. Girls, though, do begin to participate more actively in activities that are considered predominately female activities around this age, which in itself constitutes learning and practice for the activities they will be expected to spend some of their time doing as adults.

Much of children's play at this age continues to be just for fun. Such play can occur in mixed-gender and mixed-age groups as well as with people of the same gender and age, or alone. Adults encourage 4-5 year olds in their play, often looking on with grins as they chase a dog or play tag, or joining in the fun as Twaen's father did when Twaen ran the wheel towards him. 4-5 year olds are also often left to their own devices, during which time they may sit and talk, play with something they have found or play games. For example, when Twaen's older sister Tiya came home from school the two of them spent some time playing ball with Dulshiyow.

On these two days of observations, both Kwal and Twaen stayed within the vicinity of their caregivers, but it was also common for independently-minded girls of this age to wander off on their own. One of my friends came looking for her four year-old daughter at our house one evening, and on discovering she was not with us, wondered aloud whether she had gone to visit her mother's sister in a compound about twenty minutes walk down the hill. At a later date, this friend explained to me

that children are free and that it is really their decision, even as young as four or five, whether and when they come home. In practice though, children of this age are constrained by their parents' movements and can be pressured to concede to their parents' wishes. They can demand to spend the day with someone other than their mothers but they may or may not be successful. On one occasion, for example, a four year old girl resisted going to the gardens with her mother and said she wanted to go with her father instead. Her father had apparently already gone to a funeral several hours walk away and after a verbal battle, the daughter yielded and went with her mother to the garden.

Although people are glad for the extra help when children of this age contribute productively, they do not rely on it. In line with the value of equality, children are expected to be responsive when a contribution to their household is needed and they are able to make it, but learning their social obligations is more important at this age than consistently contributing to the productive efforts of the household is. People also recognise the limits to children's abilities at this age. For example, when Twaen was unsuccessful in calming Yaeb down, Horshiyow returned and took over herself.

Walak people are also aware that children asked to contribute to a task may refuse to do so, or may do it on their own terms. Twaen, for example, refused to go up to the other compound despite her mother's requests that she do so. Likewise, although she and Dulshiyow complied with her mother's request to wash the dishes, they did not finish them until hours later. In the negotiations over who was going to do what, Yaeb, Twaen and her mother all used the phrases "I want to" and "I don't want to" recurrently. These phrases are powerful and frequently used in Walak conversation because they invoke the value of autonomy. Horshiyow tried to influence Twaen, but recognised her autonomy and acknowledged that she might not always comply.

When it comes to social obligations, however, there is less patience for children in this age range than there is for younger children. By this age children are expected to recognise their obligation to share although they may still display reluctance to actually do so. For example, Kwal shared her sweets with Koten and Twaen shared her maize with Dulshiyow (not in the excerpt) without either of them being asked to do so.

Kwal was much less keen to share the biscuits she was given, but her sister Kuwmin insisted that she do so, teaching her to hand them around to each person in the room. Kwal was also reluctant to share her pieces of chicken, but as shown by the excerpt above, after a look from her brother, she did give him a larger piece than she had originally conceded to share.

Children of this age are also expected to learn the appropriate responses to different social situations, hence Twaen's mother telling her to "say thank you, stupid" when she neglected to thank me for the sugar cane I shared with her, and Kuwmin's instruction to Kwal to "say excuse me." The most notable example of this from the excerpts above was the brief and unpredicted encounter Kwal had with her *ombaye*, as her obligations to him are some of the most important ones she has. She is not criticised for not responding appropriately, but is instructed by her mother to greet him. Her mother then models the behaviour that will be expected of Kwal when she is older, by giving her *ombaye* a large sweet potato. The importance of Kwal's social relationships are also emphasised to her by the woman who asks her about her bandages; this person implies that my help with Kwal's sores is best made sense of within the framework of our (constructed) relatedness.

Young children are also frequently exposed to the social "work" that adults do (see Chapter Eight). At funerals, weddings, community meetings and exchange events, children of this age and older run and play around the edges, make their own group for receiving food, or sit with adults and listen in on the conversation. In addition to being taught about their social obligations, learning through practice, and learning through correction, children in this age range learn through observation, through listening in on conversations and through asking adults and older children "What's that?" (as Kwal asked Kuwmin), and "Who is that?" (which, for example, Twaen and Dulshiyow asked their mother about people who passed by their compound on the nearby path).

## **Children Age 6-7**

### **Pombray Karoba**

*Pombray (age 6-7) and her sister Towmow (age 12-13, see genealogy on page 192) are going to the gardens together, while their mother goes to the market. I meet*

*and join them on the path. When we arrive at the garden, Pombray stands staring out over the valley while Towmow gets to work weeding. After six minutes, Pombray starts weeding with her hands, but less than ten minutes later, she is back to staring out over the valley again. Every now and then she does a bit of half-hearted weeding, or listens to her sister who talks to her occasionally, but the rest of the time she just stands staring. Half an hour later, she does a burst of weeding, stops and stares, takes off her sweater, and then goes to sit, resting in the shade, where she stays until we all have a break.*

---

*Towmow says we are done weeding as it is so hot. She asks me, "Do you have a lighter?" and I tell her that I do. "Let's cook your maize" she suggests (earlier I had told her I had maize with me but that it was uncooked). She goes to get some firewood, asking Pombray to help her but Pombray says she does not want to. She stays behind and stares at me. A little later Pombray does go down to help gather firewood.*

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*The girls' mother, Waeruw Gombo, has just come back from the market, causing Pombray to get visibly excited and to start digging in her mother's net bag for something. A minute later Pombray pulls a dried instant noodle packet out of the net bag and jumps up and down in anticipation.*

*Towmow is grabbing and hugging Paite, their baby brother. Pombray is calling Towmow who is ignoring her. Pombray says "there are two dried instant noodle packets!" and then runs off with them. Towmow grabs her trousers and stops her.*

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*The girls are eating their instant noodle packets now. Towmow asks, "Is there one for Rachel?" and her mother answers, "Ah - there are only two!" Towmow says, "Well, yesterday Rachel shared her noodles with us..." to which Pombray responds, "Well I ordered the noodles, so you share with Rachel!" Towmow does then share her dry noodles with me.*

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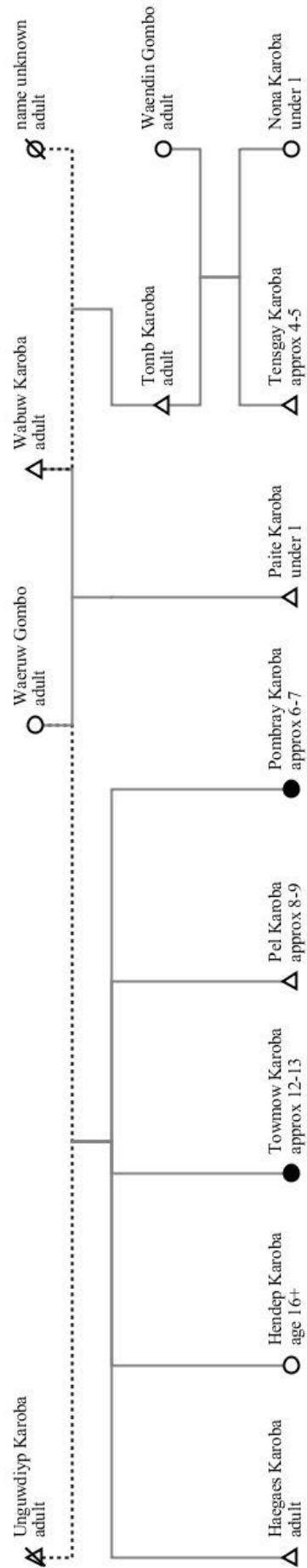
*Waeruw has gone back over to the garden now. Pombray is holding her baby brother, playing with him, shrieking every now and then for fun and eating her dry noodles. Towmow is keeping an eye on the maize which is cooking on the fire. She goes to get something to build up the fire again, and when she is done, she takes her baby brother from Pombray and hugs him so tightly that it makes him cry. Pombray is now lying down eating her noodles while Towmow plays with the baby.*

*Towmow then lies the baby on Pombray, so that she can sort out the maize in the fire. Pombray responds by screaming in protest, and kicking Towmow. Towmow takes the baby back.*

*The two girls are now fighting about who is going to look after their baby brother. It turns into a play fight which ends with Pombray running away. Towmow looks after the baby but when she needs to check the fire, she calls Pombray, who comes back and helps her.*

---

*We are back in the gardens and Pombray is wandering off on her own towards someone else's garden. I ask her mother and the other adult women where she is, to see if they have noticed her leave. They wave in the general direction she went, saying casually "Oh, she went over there." I follow her and she says that she's going up to Gabedloma, a good twenty minute walk away uphill. After walking for a while, with me a little behind her, I stop to talk to someone we pass. Pombray stops to listen, then when I am finished turns back towards the gardens. I do not think she had any purpose in going to Gabedloma; I think she was just amusing herself having become bored in the gardens. We walk back past Erliyp Karoba and her two children, Haelop (age 2-3) and Paite (age 0-1,) whom we passed earlier. Waeruw asks Pombray to fill up her thermos with water from the stream and after getting brief instructions on how to open it, Pombray sets off with Haelop following behind her. I notice that Pombray keeps an eye out for Haelop, looking back over her shoulder frequently. Once we are near the stream, she tells him how to fill the water bottle up, but as she is explaining Huruwm Gombo (an adult male relative) intervenes, shouting "show him, don't tell him!" She does not respond at first but after being yelled at two or three times, she follows Haelop down the steep path to the stream and shows him how to do it.*



***Partial genealogy for Pombray and Towmow Karoba***

**Legend for Unions**

— marriage

- - - separation or divorce

\*\*\*\*\* marriage ended due to death





*Towmow (in yellow, centre) weeding while Pombray (in front of tree) stares idly.*



*Pombray staring as I take photographs*



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*Pombray and Haelop have both returned to near where Waeruw is gardening. Pombray sits down on the mat Erliyp has laid out and picks up Paite, touching his hands and trying to push him over, but only half paying attention to him. Waeruw gardens nearby. Pombray tries to cradle Paite on her lap but he does not seem to want to be held. Waeruw who is cutting grass with a machete, hears his noises, turns around and shouts at Pombray. Pombray passes Paite to her older sister Towmow, takes the digging stick from Haelop and starts digging herself while he watches her. Later, she takes the baby back and holds him between her legs. Her older sister is supervising and hits Pombray when Paite falls over. Waeruw comes over and, seemingly unprompted, Pombray takes her place in the garden and starts cutting down long grass with a machete, looking over her shoulder every now and then to see if we're noticing her.<sup>43</sup>*

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Girls of Pombray's age continue to accompany their mothers most of the time, and consequently they spend a lot of their time in the gardens. However, as the excerpts above show, their time in the gardens is not necessarily spent gardening, as it largely is for older children and for adult women. Rather, like Pombray, girls age 6-7 may play, socialise with others whom they meet, stop and stare, or rest in the shade. Girls of this age do spend some time in gardening and harvesting and in childcare, but they tend to do these activities to amuse themselves rather than because anyone tells them that they have to.

As with all ages, the extent of a 6-7 year old girl's independence and the expectations on her to contribute depends partly on the needs of her household and partly on her personality, as well as on her age. In a household with younger children, in which a 6-7 year old girl is the eldest sibling, she may be expected to contribute more productively, but if there are older siblings around, girls of this age may not be relied on any more than younger children. In fact, as girls of this age are generally considered old enough to wander off on their own without supervision, an

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<sup>43</sup> I have focused on data from just one shadow day in the 6-7, 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13 age categories as the other girls I shadowed in each of these categories attended Ob Anggen which influenced their time use.

independent 6-7 year old like Pombray may not even be around to be asked to contribute as much as a 4-5 year old who prefers to stick more closely to her mother or caregiver. In general though, girls of this age are free to amuse themselves at will while their mothers or other caregivers engage in other activities, but when their caregivers move on (to another garden or to head home, for instance) they will accompany them.

However, by age 6-7, even girls' play is often somewhat useful to others, and they are roped in to help with tasks when needed. For example, Pombray plays with Paite of her own initiative and for her own amusement. Yet, though this childcare is play, it also allows Waeruw to undertake gardening. To an extent, Pombray is taking on a degree of delegated responsibility, but her autonomy allows her to give up her attempts at childcare when she chooses, which she does as soon as she no longer finds pleasure in it. Pombray also holds her baby brother for fun, which allows Towmow to tend the fire. Pombray then changes her mind, and when she protests that she no longer wants to look after Paite, it puts Towmow in a difficult position. Towmow carries the brunt of responsibility for caring for their brother as well as for tending the fire and cooking the maize (an activity which was itself initiated for pleasure), but Pombray does come back to help her when it is evident that Towmow really needs it. Similarly, when Pombray goes to get water for Waeruw she keeps an eye out for Haelop over her shoulder, and when Huruwm Gombo thinks she is not taking sufficient care of him by the stream, he hollers at her to look after him properly.

The following example of Wenya (age 6-7) and Wen (age 2-3) shows a similar dynamic. Wenya is an Ob Anggen pupil, but this observation was made on a non school day, and is typical of 6-7 year old girls' behaviour.

*Wenya (age 6-7) and Wen (age 2-3) are playing together. Their mother is gardening some distance away and at one point Wen says, "I want to come over with you." Their mother says "no" and the girls carry on playing together, though Wenya is looking after Wen really. Wenya keeps whispering things in Wen's ear and then every now and then coming over to tell me what Wen says in response.*

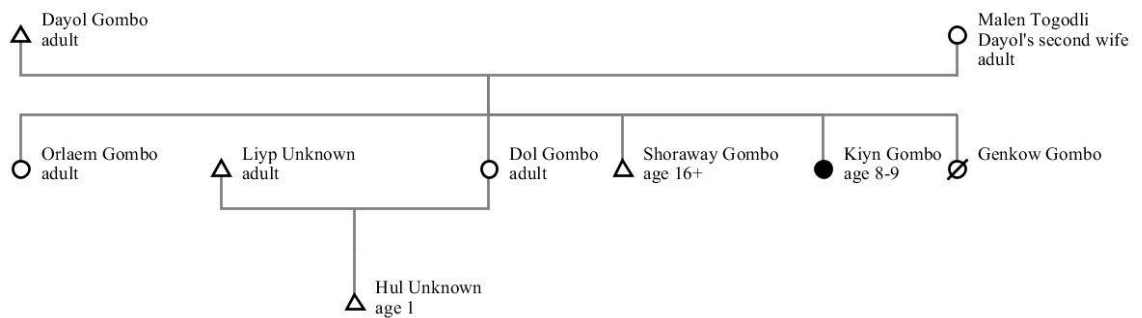
*Wenya is definitely telling Wen what to do now, but Wen seems to have the trump card of screaming every time she does not like what is going on. Wenya then tries to distract her or calm her down before their mother intervenes.*

Wenya and Wen started playing together for fun, but their mother took advantage of this and left them to garden, actively resisting Wen's request to go with her instead of staying with her sister and putting pressure on Wenya to keep Wen happy by yelling at Wenya whenever she heard Wen screaming. This example shows that although girls in the 6-7 year old age range have a lot of autonomy, they are expected to take on responsibility for younger children when necessary. 6-7 year old girls are also expected to recognise their social obligations. However, they are also old enough to be fairly independent, and they are given much less attention than younger children. In practice, their autonomy dominates their activities. For example, when Towmow and Pombray get dried instant noodles, although they both acknowledge that reciprocity puts demands on them to share with me, it is Towmow who feels the weight of this value sufficiently actually to do something about it, whereas Pombray is quite happy to palm the obligation off onto her older sister.

At this age, differences in gender are observable. Girls are free to wander off and play just as boys are, but around this age boys stop spending so much time with their mothers and other adult women, whereas girls continue to do so. Boys begin spending more time accompanying their fathers. There is also a tendency for girls and boys to play more in ways that mirror adult activities and hence are influenced by gender. In particular, girls of this age play with babies and small children much more than their male peers do, displaying a fascination with babies which I did not observe among boys of a similar age. Girls also join in recreationally with adult women's activities such as weeding, harvesting and cooking, and by doing so gain experience, instruction and correction in these areas.

## Children Age 8-9

### Kiyn Gombo



#### ***Partial genealogy for Kiyn Gombo***

*Kiyn is in the 8-9 age bracket. It's 6:40 and she, her mother Malen Togodli, and I are in their cooking house with the pigs that are rooting around. Malen has a fire going which we are sitting around, and while she tends it she talks to Kiyn about what we are going to do today (namely, go to the gardens).*

*Malen is feeding the pigs now with raw sweet potatoes and Kiyn is watching me put on suncream. One of the large pigs trips and falls towards me and my bag. At that point, Malen tells Kiyn to sit next to the pigs to protect me from them. Kiyn takes a stick and whacks the pigs when they come too near to us. Throughout their activities, Kiyn and Malen chat about what I am doing and about which garden to go to.*

*Malen is herding all the pigs back into their sty now and telling Kiyn to get the uncooked sweet potatoes to feed to them. "Quickly" she says to Kiyn, but Kiyn is struggling with carrying the pile of sweet potatoes. Malen has let a different pig out to eat this new supply of sweet potatoes, and while it does so, Malen and Kiyn sit down together to eat the sweet potatoes they have baked earlier in the ashes of the fire.*

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*Malen is trying a grass skirt on Kiyn, who seems delighted with it. The skirt goes all the way down to Kiyn's feet and Malen is straightening out the pieces of grass and talking to Kiyn about how to wear it properly. Malen then takes a knife and cuts the pieces of grass to the right length for Kiyn, talking to her the whole time as she does it.*



***Malen getting ready to cut Kiyn's grass skirt to the right length***

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*Kiyn, her mother and I have just arrived in one of their gardens, and her mother tells Kiyn to harvest maize, which Kiyn starts doing cheerfully, pulling the whole plant out by its roots and throwing it to the side for her mother to collect. She shows me how to identify which stalks are ready to harvest and which ones are not. After a few minutes, she stops as her new grass skirt is uncomfortably tight. She asks Malen to loosen it for her, which she does.*

*A bit later, after Kiyn has come back over to where I am harvesting, Malen calls out to her, "Stop messing around with your grass skirt and help Rachel!" Kiyn responds "she [Rachel] can do it!" "No," her mother calls back, "Don't say 'she can do it' - do it*

*together!" About two minutes later Kiyn takes her grass skirt off altogether (Kiyn is wearing shorts underneath her grass skirt, as Walak girls and women usually do) and puts it down at the side. We start pulling the maize off the stalks and Kiyn and Malen chat to each other while we harvest.*



***Kiyn's mother Malen harvesting maize***

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*We have moved on to a different garden now, where we plan to harvest sweet potatoes. We have been joined by Dol Gombo (who is Kiyn's older sister) and her son Hul (age 1) who we met on the way. Kiyn's mother has started to harvest and Kiyn is sitting at the side, where Hul is going up to her and saying her name. She is picking him up, imitating him holding his ears, hugging him and pulling him onto her lap. He is now*



*playing with a stick, pretending to garden. His mother said the word that means "forbidden" but he is carrying on and she is ignoring him.<sup>44</sup>*

*Kiyn and Hul want to play with Dol's hair. She is letting Hul but not letting Kiyn. Now Dol is going off to help garden and Hul is running after her. Kiyn is sitting, singing to herself, tapping a stick on the ground. Hul has come back over and is staring at me, then looking at Kiyn. Kiyn gives him a sweet potato to eat, then throws his stick towards his mother saying "run after it" to Hul. He does, but it proves too far for his liking and when he comes back he starts to cry. Kiyn hits him very lightly with her stick and he cries even harder. He is looking around to see who is listening to him cry. His mother seems to be ignoring him. Kiyn is pretending to hit him again and smiling. When he sees that no one is listening to him cry, he stops crying briefly, then starts again. He suddenly notices that he has got Malen's attention and starts crying more loudly still until Malen takes him on her shoulders.*

*After a while, Malen goes back to harvesting and Kiyn continues interacting with Hul for the next five minutes until her mother finishes gardening. The three of us sit at the side of the garden eating some baked sweet potato they have brought from home while we wait for Dol to finish her gardening.*

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*We are back at Kiyn's cooking house now and have been cooking maize over the fire. A compound neighbour's pigs are coming close to the house and Kiyn's mother says "Kiyn, go, send them away!" Kiyn goes over to the door and Hul follows her; she is now hugging him in the door and kissing him. She makes funny noises to entertain Hul, until Malen says "Stop!" which Kiyn does. Malen and Dol are discussing something and Kiyn is half listening in. She interrupts with a question to ask what they are talking about and Malen answers her before continuing the conversation with Dol. Kiyn is leaning on Hul who is trying to get her off him. At one point she steps over him (which is forbidden) and Dol gives her a whack.<sup>45</sup>*

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<sup>44</sup> I am not sure why Dol said "forbidden" to Hul - it could be because he is a boy doing a woman's activity, but if so, Dol is being stricter with 1 year old Hul than Laerem was with 3 year old Aebow.

<sup>45</sup> Stepping over someone is also forbidden in other parts of the New Guinea highlands. For example, among the Wola, it is a gendered taboo relating to female pollution (Sillitoe, 2010a, 225).

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*Kiyn's mother is putting some sweet potato leaves down on the cooking house floor to protect it from the pigs and is now opening the pig sties for all the pigs to come out. She is calling Kiyn to help because the pigs are trying to get into the sleeping house but Kiyn is ignoring her.*

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These excerpts show signs of Kiyn beginning to make a transition from spending her time in ways that are similar to younger children to spending her time in ways that are more like adult women. Malen treats Kiyn much more like a peer than any of the adults treated younger children on the shadow days. They talk to each other throughout the day, Malen tells Kiyn what she is doing, and she involves Kiyn in decisions such as which garden or gardens to go to. She also cuts Kiyn's grass skirt for her, telling her how to wear it properly. To an extent these kinds of interactions depend on the personalities and relationship of mothers and daughters, but age does play a part and in the 8-9 age bracket the transition towards participation in the female adult world is noticeable. Kiyn is further drawn into this world by the way she listens in to her mother and sister's conversation; when at one point she does not fully understand she asks for clarification and is given it. All of this conversation constitutes learning for Kiyn.

Kiyn is also given more instructions on her activities than Pombray was, and than younger girls normally would be, and there is a stronger expectation that she will respond to them. Kiyn is told to protect me from the pigs, to harvest maize, to send the pigs away, to help her mother with the pigs, to stop making noises to entertain Hul and not to step over Hul. She is evidently expected to participate productively in her mother's activities and when she stops harvesting maize to sort out her skirt, her mother soon intervenes, instructing her to help. This may have been motivated by my presence and by the just assumption that I did not really know what I was doing, but it is because of Kiyn's age that her mother feels she can expect Kiyn not to leave me alone harvesting. This is quite a contrast from the nonchalant attitude the adult women took to Pombray wandering away from the gardens.



These expectations on Kiyn as to what she should do with her time should not be understood as an expectation that she should, now that she is older, forsake her autonomy. On the contrary, although Kiyn's mother expects Kiyn to make a contribution and Kiyn, in turn, is mostly responsive to her requests, her mother does not control her activities. For example, Kiyn ignores her mother's instruction to help prevent the pigs getting in to the sleeping house and instead carries on playing with Hul. Likewise, in the sweet potato garden Kiyn plays with Hul while her mother and Hul's mother garden. Playing with Hul is productive, in that it frees up the mothers to garden, but Kiyn's mother does not insist that Kiyn take over gardening when she herself takes over looking after Hul because he is crying. It is not that Kiyn has lost her autonomy, but that she is expected to allow the obligation to participate and contribute to household activities shape how she uses it.

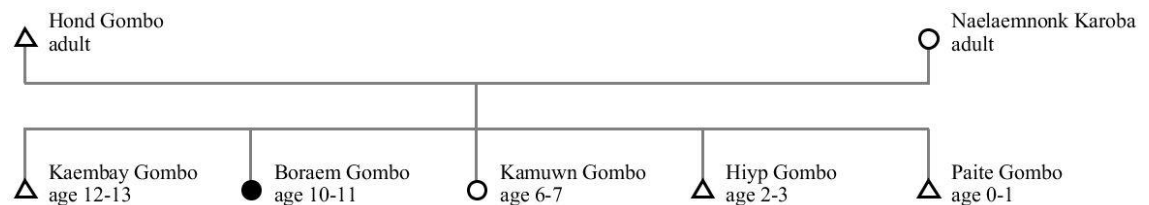
As I would expect for a context in which people's contributions are organised by gender, this age bracket, in which children are expected to make more productive contributions through their activities, is also attended by increasingly gender-determined activities. Whilst play and idleness dominate younger children's time and are often gender-mixed, Kiyn spends a good proportion of her time doing activities which men and boys take little part in, such as the pig care and maize harvesting that her mother instructs her to do. She does still spend a lot of time amusing herself by playing with Hul but even this constitutes childcare, which is a predominantly female activity.

Boys of this age are considered independent and do not spend much time with their mothers; they are most likely to spend it with male peers or with groups which may include older children. All of the boys of this age in Ikonium attended Ob Anggen, which is reflected in the fact that all fifty-three of the observations I made in the spot observation of boys who I could place in this age category were of Ob Anggen pupils (see Chapter Seven for further spot observation results). It is therefore hard to know how much their behaviour was affected by schooling, though Chapter Seven would suggest that their time use outside of school is likely to be a fairly accurate guide as to what children of their age would be doing were they not attending school. The largest number of observations of boys outside of school for this age category was of play,

which corresponds with what I observed more generally. Boys were also observed participating in productive activities such as construction, fetching, and searching for a lost hen. At this age, boys and girls play together less than they do at younger ages.

## Children Age 10-11

### Boraem Gombo



**Partial genealogy for Boraem Gombo**

*Boraem Gombo is in the 10-11 age bracket. When I arrive in the compound she is playing on the ground on her own. Because I have arrived and am in a compound I do not visit frequently, people start coming out of their sleeping houses and their cooking houses to see me, ask for medicines and find out what I am doing. Paite (Boraem's brother, age 0-1) comes out and hits a dog that has puppies and Boraem runs to him to prevent him getting bitten. She then hits Hiyp (her brother, age 2-3) because he is making annoying noises.*

*A little later Boraem starts preparing pandanus fruit. Kamuwn (her sister, age 6-7) is watching and occasionally helping to pour water as needed. Kamuwn starts making red marks on Boraem's arms and Boraem says "get away" but is laughing. Boraem starts calling to Hiyp. He turns around and looks at her, but does not respond, and she continues preparing the fruit. It takes some time and about fifteen minutes later no one is helping Boraem and she is pouring the water she needs herself, despite her bright red hands which dirty the water bottle. Her mother comes over and looks at what Boraem is doing. She watches Boraem and gives instructions on how to do it; Boraem responds with "yes."*

*Boraem's mother goes off to wash clothes and dishes. She calls behind her with various jobs for Boraem to do. At one point, she is calling to Boraem but as Boraem has already gone to do another chore her mother asked her to do, I call back that she is not here any longer. Her mother responds to me by saying "Oh, she is stubborn!"*



***Boraem Gombo carrying her baby brother Paite***

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*Boraem's compound has a private area for people in the compound to bathe, wash dishes and wash clothes; two pipes direct water from a stream into a rectangular area which is hidden by vegetation, a fence and a tarpaulin. Boraem is in there bathing, her mother is in there washing dishes and clothes, another adult woman is in there washing dishes, Paite is in there crawling through puddles of water fully dressed, and Hiyp and Kamuwn are standing at the side watching. While Boraem finishes and gets dressed, her mother takes Paite's clothes off and splashes water on him, and then Boraem carries him out naked to go and get clean clothes. She makes faces at him affectionately as she carries him.*

---

*The children are now sitting in the compound. Boraem is using a razor blade to clean her nails and when she finishes, she cleans Hiyp's nails and then Kamuwn's too. Paite is sitting on the grass, playing in the dirt and no one is overtly paying attention to him. Paite puts some dirty sweet potato in his mouth and Kamuwn notices and points it out. Boraem grabs him and holds him so that she can take the sweet potato out of his mouth, then throws it away, puts him down, and goes back to cleaning nails. Hiyp starts throwing stones, which Boraem whacks him lightly for, but it soon turns into a game in which Hiyp throws stones at Boraem and she runs away. Paite starts crying and Kamuwn responds by lifting him up and hugging him.*

---

*Paite has been crying and Kamuwn has been trying to comfort him while Boraem does a few chores like putting a blanket out to dry in the sun. Now that she's finished, Boraem takes Paite and he stops crying. She walks him up and down, and then starts dressing him. He is still crying a little bit, and his mother is now coming out of the sleeping house with his net bag, so Boraem gives her the baby. Their mother feeds him while putting him into his net bag.*

*While she is feeding him, Boraem's mother gives her further instructions, such as to sort out the plates quickly, before we go to a funeral.*

---

*We have come down to the funeral now. Other than the adult men, the group we arrived with all went straight to the area where people are preparing vegetables to cook. Other children are playing but Boraem is helping to prepare vegetables - she is probably the youngest child doing so. She is also imitating the adult women in telling the other children to be quiet. She tries saying "give me a knife" to one of the other women in a similar tone to that which adult women normally use with each other, but to no avail - she is ignored. When the vegetables are all ready to be cooked, the adults sit around chatting and Boraem sits cleaning a friend's nails with a razor blade until she gets sent to fetch chillies. When she gets back she is in a more playful mood, and is*

*playing with the little children more now. She gets asked to go and get more water, which she does, knocking her sibling's head on the way, laughing.*

---

*[Still at the funeral] Boraem and her friend have sat down under a tree on their own, with bowls of food. They eat, wash their plates, then go over to the area where the cooking was happening. They join another girl and chase each other around the half constructed building the adults are using to prepare more vegetables in, until they get told off by a young man. They do not stop immediately and get told off again, by two different men.*

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The transition girls make towards spending their time in ways more similar to adult women than to younger children is even more evident in the observations I made of Boraem than in those I made of Kiyn. Boraem is far more frequently instructed to do chores, such as to wash the plates, fetch chillies or fetch water, than either younger children (who are not expected to contribute so much) or older children (who are not expected to need so much instruction). She is also instructed by her mother in how to prepare the pandanus fruit properly (although she had been doing it with no instruction up to that point). Boraem's younger siblings see her as the sibling on whom most of the responsibility rests, too. Thus, Kamuwn picks up her crying baby brother while Boraem is playing with Hiyp, and tries to comfort him while Boraem is doing chores, but when Boraem is available, she gives him back to Boraem to hold. Similarly, while Boraem prepares the pandanus fruit for the funeral, Kamuwn only does the helpful task of pouring water for Boraem while she is interested and while she is making a game of it; she then walks off and leaves Boraem to complete the task on her own.

More importantly, perhaps, is the fact that it is not just external expectations of girls of Boraem's age that have changed. Boraem demonstrates this in the way that she consistently initiates her own participation in the types of activities adult women normally do. For example, Boraem runs to stop her brother hitting the dog with puppies, she starts preparing the pandanus fruit for the funeral, she takes Paite from

their mother and carries him out of the bathing area, she later dresses him, she initiates chores like putting blankets out to dry in the sun and she joins in with preparing the vegetables at the funeral. Unlike the younger children who joined in with adult women's activities, Boraem appears to participate in these activities out of a sense of responsibility, rather than as a way of amusing herself. Boraem's contributions are also much more relied upon by her mother and her siblings than younger children's contributions are.

At points, Boraem acts more like an adult woman than like a child. Her behaviour is increasingly gendered. This is most pronounced at the funeral. While men move to the main area to grieve and small children of both genders run around playing, Boraem joins the women who go straight to the cooking area. She also echoes adult female activities in her preparation for the funeral when she supervises younger children in the compound whilst preparing cooked food to contribute (thereby taking responsibility for part of her household's contribution to female reciprocal exchange activity). She, like Kiyn, differentiates herself from younger children by caring for them, teaching them, protecting them and telling them what to do, but unlike Kiyn who seems to take on childcare responsibilities primarily for her own pleasure, Boraem seems self-conscious about supervising and instructing younger children, just as she seems to self-consciously imitate the adult women at the funeral. She is no longer just watching, listening, being instructed and imitating; it seems that she is beginning to try on adult women's roles for herself.

Nonetheless, the excerpts from the shadow day with Boraem also make evident the fact that she is still, in many ways, a child. For example, when she says "give me a knife" to one of the adult women she is participating in that moment as a peer of the adults, but the woman she speaks to ignores her, treating her as a child. Likewise, she imitates the adults who tell the other children to be quiet when they run around playing at the funeral, but not much later she herself is in the position of a child being told off for playing too noisily at a funeral. Boraem is old enough to be competent in taking initiative and responsibility in productive activity, but she is also young enough to be comfortable playing, even at a funeral.

## Children Age 12-13

### Towmow Karoba

*Towmow is in the 12-13 age bracket (see genealogy on page 192). When I arrive, Towmow is helping her mother wash dishes in the cooking house. Pombray is in the next door compound. Later, as they get ready to go out to the gardens, Towmow and her mother swap holding the baby and getting the things, such as baby clothes and gardening tools, ready for the day.*

---

*We're in the garden now. Another adult woman is gardening nearby. Towmow's mother is planting sweet potatoes, I am holding Paite in the net bag on my head, and Pombray and Towmow are playing with my camera. They are examining it and talking together excitedly. They watch their mother garden on and off. I teach Towmow how to use the camera and she immediately teaches her sister how to use it, though she finds it challenging and eventually asks me to do it. I take a photo of her and show her on the screen and she stares at it, delighted.*



*The picture I took of Towmow*



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*Towmow - seemingly spontaneously - lays out a cloth, and makes some shade over it by moving some leafy branches, then indicates to me to sit down with Paite. At this point I discover that her actions were not spontaneous, but that she has noticed something I had not: Paite is awake. She tells me to put him on my lap and open up all the net bags, as I have seen other women do. She and Pombray want to take photos of Paite so we do and then I put the camera away so that it will be less of an influence on their behaviour and interactions. As Paite is crying, Towmow takes him, which stops him crying. She removes his trousers, which are wet, and affirms to me that I should remove the other things that are wet in the net bag.*



***Towmow, Pombray and Paite***



*Towmow plays with Paite while he sits on my lap in the shade. She makes faces at him. Pombray tries to lift up Paite and he tries to reach for my audio recorder. Towmow forbids Pombray from picking him up and hits her until she stops. Pombray goes and plays on a tree; Towmow stays with Paite and me.*

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*Waeruw pauses gardening and comes up to feed Paite. Towmow watches her mother who is holding Paite now, while Pombray cuts up a piece of wood with a machete. Towmow is hugging Paite and trying to take him from her mother; she is also lightly and playfully whacking him. Their mother is focused on a passionate conversation with the other adult woman, who is still gardening. From what I can catch, it seems to be about some problem in the community. Towmow is listening in. Eventually she takes Paite from her mother and plays with him on her lap.*

---

*We are in a different garden now. Towmow and I are sitting in the shade with Paite, who is playing with earth, then grabbing Towmow's sugar cane. Pombray has run off with some other children and is playfully weeding in a nearby garden. The two mothers are harvesting nearby. Towmow is getting fed up with Paite grabbing her sugar cane, and even says "get away!" to him, which is notable given the usual indulgent attitude towards babies. The more impatient she gets with him, the more her mother, who is watching out of the corner of her eye, gets impatient with her. Towmow seems bored, and says she needs to urinate. I take Paite from her, and the next thing I see she is gardening. I hear her tell her mother that "Rachel wants to leave" and her mother turns around to ask me if that is true. I respond that I am fine and Towmow, thwarted, says "let's go to kamp," (Indonesian for "camp" and the word used locally for temporary shelters). Her mother encourages her to do so and to take the baby, but Towmow walks away and does not respond to anything that either her mother or I say. She seems fed up, bored and hot.*

---

*Waeruw is trying to give the baby back to Towmow after having fed him, but Towmow is resisting.*

---

Eventually Towmow and I do go to the nearby temporary shelter with the baby, initiated by Towmow herself. Towmow lays the cloth down inside for Paite to lie on as it is so hot outside. She is eating sugar cane. Paite is clapping his hands. I am working on making a net bag. Pombray is not with us; I suspect she is still playing with the other children. Towmow lies down, playing with Paite and trying to communicate with me a little. Paite makes noises and reaches out with his hands, but Towmow mostly ignores him. After a while Towmow walks Paite around to keep him happy, as he does not stay settled lying down. At one point she gives him a lighter to play with to keep him entertained.

---

Pombray turns up and soon she hits Towmow, saying "kewe, kewe..." (Walak for "get out of the way"). I am not sure what she is referring to as Towmow does not seem to be in the way of anything, but the girls start fighting and kicking each other, half-laughing, half-serious. It turns into playing, with a bit of yelling every now and then. They are mostly ignoring Paite. Paite has stopped crying - he looks fascinated as he watches his sisters - and the girls are wrestling on the floor with each other. Pombray then gets upset and starts crying. Towmow is hitting Pombray pretty hard, but Pombray stops crying in an instant and they carry on playing until suddenly one of them chases the other outside and they leave me with Paite and run around chasing each other outside.

Paite starts crying again though, and Towmow comes running back in to stop him from crying, which she does by singing really loudly. As soon as she stops singing, he starts crying again. I take him for a while to stop him from crying, which works, but not for long, and he ends up screaming. Towmow is now doing anything she can to stop him from crying, including hitting him and shouting at him, which does not work. Nothing works, until his mother arrives and he gets fed.

---

We are heading off now. There was a bit of a debate about whether I should try to carry something heavy home or not. I am willing but unused to the difficult terrain

*and in the end it was decided that I should not. I am only carrying the machete and the things from the harvest that I have been given, but Towmow is carrying a big pile of wood on her head, which is so heavy that she does not manage to carry it all the way. I try to relieve her and am exhausted by the small distance I carry it. Pombray, by contrast, has a small net bag with three or four heads of maize and a few other light bits and pieces. Their mother has Paite in a net bag and then another tied net bag full of tubers on her head, which is apparently heavy too, as when I offer to take it she refuses to let me. The baby is heavy on his own, so this is impressive.*

---

*We're back in the cooking house and Waeruw has just returned, having been to a third garden for an hour and ten minutes on her own, to harvest sweet potato. She takes Paite from Towmow who starts cooking vegetables for everyone. Pombray has gone off on her own.*



***Towmow cooking vegetables.***

As the excerpts above illustrate, by the time girls are in the 12-13 age bracket, as Towmow is, the transition into participating in activities more like those of adult

women which begins in the 8-9 age bracket and becomes particularly visible and important in the 10-11 age bracket, has made an impact. Girls of this age spend a considerable proportion of their time doing activities which are similar to - and which make a productive contribution to - their mothers' activities. Unlike younger children, they do this without being asked to, even when they would rather be doing something else.

The contrast between Towmow's activities and those of Pombray, both here and in Pombray's shadow day, particularly highlights this. For example, when I first arrived on this day, Towmow was washing dishes and then moved on to working with her mother to prepare for going out for the day, each of them taking it in turns to hold the baby in order to free the other up to do necessary jobs. Pombray, meanwhile, hung out in the next door compound until she was called to leave. In the first garden, while both girls were intrigued by me and my devices, Towmow was also keeping an eye on Paite and as soon as he woke up she focused her attention on him. In the second garden, Pombray took herself off to play at gardening with other children, but Towmow stayed with Paite even though she seemed frustrated to be doing childcare. When we left, Towmow's share of the physical load that needed to be carried home was more similar to her mother's than to her sister's, and once we got back to the cooking house, Towmow cooked vegetables while Pombray played outside. Similarly, on the day I shadowed Pombray, Towmow weeded while Pombray stared across the valley and Towmow took responsibility for both looking after Paite and tending the fire while Pombray contributed only when absolutely necessary.

Towmow does not just contribute more productively because she is more skilled, such that when she gardens, cooks, or engages in childcare her efforts are more effective. Rather, by contrast with Pombray who more or less does what she wants, Towmow spends time doing activities that she clearly would rather not do. In other words, Towmow's activities are much more constrained by obligation than Pombray's are. This has already been demonstrated above in the example of Towmow sharing her dried noodles with me: Towmow was willing to compromise her own pleasure for the sake of meeting a social obligation. Indeed, she initiated doing so, while Pombray avoided doing so. In the excerpts above, Towmow shows resistance to

her mother's efforts to get her to care for her baby brother, and makes strategic use of my presence, telling her mother that it was I who want to leave the gardens when in fact she wants to leave. When this does not work, she hands Paite off to me, claiming to need the toilet and then taking the opportunity to join her mother gardening. She also shows her frustration by saying "get away" to Paite, and she leaves Paite with me while she and Pombray chase each other outside the temporary shelter. Despite her reluctance, though, she does spend most of the day looking after Paite, which frees her mother up to garden.

Although obligation plays a greater part in shaping Towmow's activities than it does younger girls' activities, it is important to note that the reason she spends so much time in childcare is not because her autonomy is overruled. She is put under more pressure to do childcare than younger children usually are, but although her mother both implicitly and explicitly pressures Towmow to take care of Paite, Towmow is not punished for her resistance, nor does her mother force the matter. For example, when Towmow walks off wordlessly, seemingly in frustration at her mother's suggestion that she take Paite with her to *kamp*, no one intervenes. Nonetheless she comes back and eventually ends up saying to me "it's hot, let's go to *kamp*," then puts Paite into his net bag to take him with us. Likewise, although she leaves Paite alone with me for a few minutes at *kamp*, when she hears him crying she comes running back and sings to him. This was out of sight and earshot of her mother and shows that despite her resistance, Towmow has internalised a sense of responsibility for Paite's care which she is not willing to completely delegate to me. Towmow has not lost her autonomy, but she is now old enough that she can be trusted to manage her autonomy in relation to her obligations, in the way that adult women do. As a result, by Towmow's age girls' productive contribution is often relied upon by their mothers. For example, it is usual for a girl of Towmow's age to be left with a younger child to look after while their mother go to the market or further away gardens.

Towmow is competent in her activities, but not completely independent in them; her mother still watches her and gives her some instruction when she is around. This is not to teach Towmow skills, but rather to manage the household activities as a whole. For example, it is Towmow's mother who suggests that Towmow, Pombray,

Paite and I go home while she goes on to harvest more sweet potatoes, and it is she who instigates the cooking on her return, although it is Towmow who actually cooks. Towmow mostly either converses briefly with her mother about these decisions and then goes along with them, or defers to her immediately, but as with the childcare which she did not want to do in the garden, she does sometimes resist her mother's instructions and suggestions.

By Towmow's age, girls also spend most of their time in gendered ways, both in terms of the activities they do and whom they are with. On both the shadow days I spent with Pombray and Towmow, Towmow spent most of her time with women and girls (excepting her baby brother), doing activities such as gardening, cooking and childcare which are primarily female activities. Most of the boys of this age from the area attended either Ob Anggen or the state SMP school, so it is difficult to generalise about their activities outside of school. Like their female peers, they seemed to participate much more actively in adult male activities such as collecting firewood, construction and attending events, though they were not yet active participants in exchange transactions and would not be for many years yet. By this age, boys also sleep in the appropriate men's house rather than in their mother's house.

## **Children Age 14-15**

### **Wasnonk Togodli**

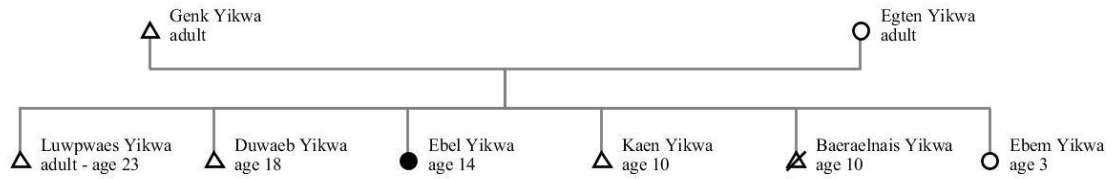
*Wasnonk is in the 14-15 age bracket. At 9:40 Wasnonk, myself and an adult woman head out from the compounds towards the gardens. Wasnonk and I go to one of her family's gardens to weed and harvest sweet potatoes. She talks briefly to the adult women in the adjacent gardens about me accompanying her that day, and at another point about where a passing young man is going, but for most of the time she gardens and harvests in silence. Even when the women in the gardens nearby talk to each other, she stays quiet, focusing on the gardening and harvesting she is doing.*

*She stays in the garden for four and a quarter hours.<sup>46</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> Wasnonk Togodli was one of the girls who seemed uncomfortable being shadowed by me (see Chapter Three) so I cut my shadow day with her short and have only included a brief excerpt about her activities here. I have not included a genealogy as her relatives do not feature in the text.

## Ebel Yikwa



### ***Partial genealogy for Ebel Yikwa***

*Ebel is also in the 14-15 age bracket. When I arrive at 7:40 Ebel is washing dishes in the pond near her family's cooking house, where her father, her brother Efraem (age 10-11) and her sister Ebem (age 2-3, see previous shadow day excerpts above) are. They tell me that Ebel's mother has gone to harvest pandanus fruit (it involves travelling quite a distance, which explains why she did not take Ebem with her) and had told Ebel to harvest sweet potato while she was gone. After some conversation, Ebel and I set off for the gardens. Ebem cries to go with us, but Ebel resists and her father backs her up, keeping Ebem with him.*

---

*We're in the gardens now; it's 7:55. We get to work. Ebel, as she has a digging stick, harvests sweet potatoes and I harvest leaves. We stop not long after starting because we hear the yodel across the hills that means someone has died. We listen, but are unable to hear who has died. Ebel shouts out to ask, but we get no response in return. We continue gardening, talking as we do. At one point I ask if we are harvesting for people or for pigs and, seemingly astonished at my ignorance, she checks what I am asking. When I repeat my question, she tells me we are harvesting for pigs, adding that "people eat big sweet potatoes" (the ones we are harvesting are small by comparison).*

*After thirty-five minutes, we head back towards her cooking house, which is about a twenty minute walk away, including the stops we make on the way to greet people and find out who has died.*

---

*Having headed out from the cooking house again at about 10:00, and having sat at the viewpoint talking to Kwalten Gombo (age 4-5) and her mother Tamiy, Ebel*



*suggests we go and see Shoraway and Pebet (teenage male relatives of Ebel's) who are sitting on the grass outside Pebet's house, just over the volleyball field from where we are.*

*We join them. The three of them sit talking in the sun and I lie behind their backs on the grass, taking notes and pictures. After about ten minutes, Alinus starts wandering around whistling and Ebel and Pebet casually throw and bat a small, hard bud (called borabora), seeing how many times they can hit it. They continue talking, mostly ignoring me, though Ebel glances at me every now and then, particularly when I take audio notes. After about forty minutes the boys walk off and when I ask Ebel if she wants to go with them she responds, "No, they're boys." She suggests we go to my house instead.*



***Ebel washing sweet potatoes in a small stream that goes through the gardens***

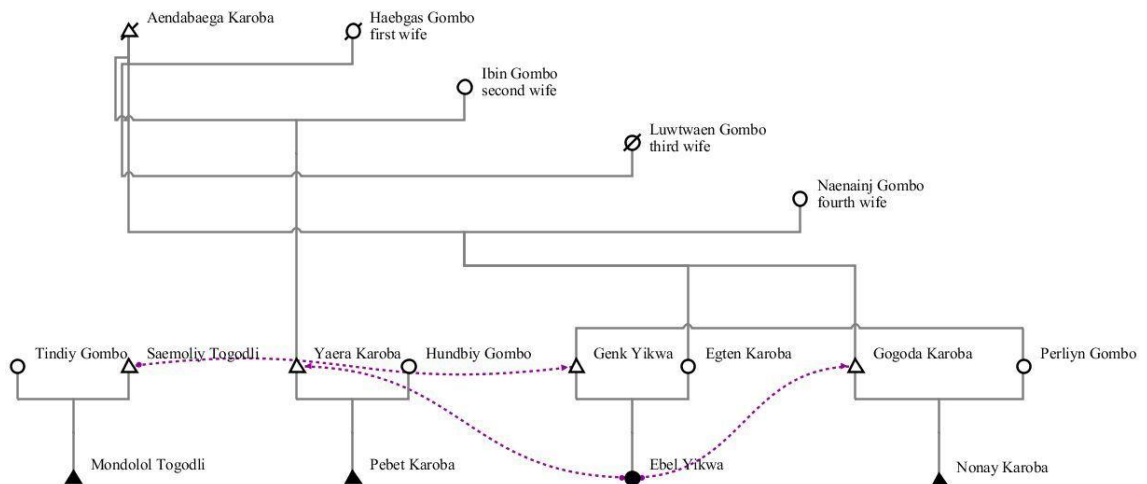
*Later, we go to different gardens to harvest sweet potatoes. Iriska (age 10-11) comes too, as her garden is nearby, and Orlob (age 4-5) accompanies us, which Ebel*



*does not resist. We arrive in the gardens at just gone noon. We harvest sweet potatoes, clean them, and harvest leaves till about 14:10. In that time, Ebel alone harvests sixty-nine sweet potatoes. She gives away four large ones on our way back up the hill; I weigh the remaining potatoes in her net bag when we get back to the cooking house - they weigh nineteen and a half kilograms.*

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*Back in the cooking house, just before 15:00, Ebel goes to get water in a bowl and sends Orlob with a bit of wood to go and get fire from a neighbour. When Ebel returns, she opens the door for the pigs to enter the sty, and with the glowing brand Orlob brings, makes a fire and starts cooking vegetables. She tells me she is cooking for three teenage boys as well as for her household. These are Nonay (who would not eat at home that day because his mother would be getting home late), Pebet (whose mother was at a neighbour's cooking house) and Mondolol. Nonay and Pebet are both Ebel's ombaye and Mondolol is her father's ombaye (see Chapter Two and genealogy below). They do not actually turn up for food though.*



***Partial genealogy showing how Ebel Yikwa is related to Nonay, Pebet and Mondolol***

The purple dotted lines highlight that Saemoliy, and hence Mondolol, are Genk's ombaye, and that Gogoda, and hence Nonay, are Ebel's ombaye, as is Yaera, and hence Pebet,

*When the vegetables are ready, Ebel divides them up: a plate for Orlob, a small bowl, fairly full, for her parents and older brother, a plate for Selpia's family who have just had a baby on Monday - which Ebel later takes up to their compound, where she intends to stay the night - and then what was left in the big bowl for her and I to eat.*

---

Girls in the 14-15 age bracket are more or less independent from their mothers. They may get told what to do by them - for instance, Ebel has apparently been told by her mother to harvest sweet potatoes while her mother is gone for the day - but they are left to manage their obligations, their autonomy and their choices for themselves, though they are expected to do so within the context of the whole household's needs. The spot observation data show that the most common activities for adult women to do are gardening and harvesting (25.09%), cooking and food preparation (16.48%), attending funerals (11.99%), engaging in other social activities (9.74%) travelling to and from the market (9.36%), undertaking childcare (4.87%) and pig husbandry (4.12%).<sup>47</sup> With the exception of travelling to and from the market, these activities are how girls observed in the 14-15 age category spend their time as well. Wasnonk and Ebel go to the gardens on their own and spend nearly all of the time that they are in the gardens actually planting, harvesting, or weeding, unlike younger children who spend most of their time in the gardens playing, resting and being idle. Wasnonk then spends the rest of her day at a funeral. Ebel, in addition to harvesting food for both pigs and people, does household chores like washing dishes, engages in social activities, cooks for her household and for relatives, herds pigs, and inadvertently ends up caring for Orlob at points. Ebel also demonstrates the autonomy and flexibility that attend these activities: she stops to socialise with people along her way, she spends an unhurried couple of hours resting and talking with friends in the sun, and she manages to get out of looking after her younger sister, who stays with their father for the day.

Many of these activities demonstrate the importance of social relationships and of reciprocity to these girls. Ebel, for example, engages in exchange activity when she gives away the sweet potatoes. She also explains to me who she is cooking for, and why, by citing their kin relationships to her, implying their attendant obligations (*ombaye* relationships inherently have obligations for the *ambiko*, see Chapter Two). The funeral, for Wasnonk, and the visit to take cooked food to the mother with a newborn, for Ebel, are also typical of Walak women's social activities.

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<sup>47</sup> Based on 267 observations. A large proportion of pig husbandry is cooking for pigs which is accounted for in "cooking;" this should be taken into account when interpreting these results.

In comparison with younger girls, Ebel and Wasnonk, like other 14-15 year old girls, are not taught much in their day-to-day activities. By this age they have learned what they need to know to be independent. Instead, these girls have moved into the position of teaching younger children. For example, in the garden Orlob observed Ebel closely, making comments and asking questions every now and then, and involving herself in what Ebel was doing. Ebel only made occasional comments in response, but continued to garden while Orlob watched her, and when she saw me videoing Orlob attempting to harvest herself, Ebel instructed and corrected Orlob's attempts and then got involved, helping her.



*Orlob watches closely while Ebel harvests sweet potatoes.*

## **The Emergence of the Gender Division of Activities**

Productive effort and the meeting of relational obligations are largely organised by gender among the Walak, so as children are increasingly expected to meet their responsibilities, gender increasingly has an effect on their activities. There is a subtle difference between arguing that an increasing awareness of one's gender leads to an increasing sense of obligation to do particular activities, and arguing the reverse, as I

am here: namely that an increasing sense of obligation leads to spending more time doing activities which are organised by gender. Walak people never made this distinction to me and the data suggest that the pressure on children to contribute productively and to meet their social obligations emerges in tandem with gender roles. It is my impression, however, that in this process it is a sense of obligation which is primary, not a sense of gender. This suggestion is supported in part by the fact that, as evidenced in Chapter Two, Walak people are fairly flexible about gender roles in comparison to some other Papuan highland groups, but they are not relaxed about people meeting or defaulting on their obligations. There seems to me to be a perception that people who do activities which are normally done by someone of the opposite gender are strange people, but that people who do not consider their obligations to others are bad people.

Having said that, as gender and obligation are so closely connected in Walak life the question of which is primary is somewhat academic: acknowledgement of each affects the other in everyday life. For example, one mother whose son was resisting her instruction in that moment commented despairingly that boys were stubborn and could not be made to contribute whereas girls were more compliant because they sympathise with their mothers and wish to alleviate the pressures on them. Such beliefs about gender differences affect what kind of pressure and instruction is given to children of different genders - and by whom - and further affect how the children themselves participate. This boy was using his autonomy to resist his mother's request just as a girl may have done, but his mother's belief about gender prevented her from pressuring him further to help her in the cooking house and reassured him that he would not be expected to do so, whereas a girl may have been put under more pressure to respond, whether now or on a future occasion. Had the activity been a male activity and the parent been his father, however, this son would not so easily have escaped the expectation that he contribute. Thus, the value of equality does place an expectation on children to make a contribution, and children may sometimes be asked to help out in ways that do not fit gender norms, but the obligations that are expected to most inform children's choices are heavily shaped by gender.

Regardless of whether awareness of one's obligations or awareness of one's gender is primary, they emerge concurrently, as the shadow excerpts show. The gender division of activities is not suddenly enforced on children. Rather, as they get older, children spend more and more time with people of the same gender and those people increasingly request, encourage and pressure them to behave in ways that eventually lead to the gender division of activities evident in adult activities.

### **Play as Learning**



***A young boy with a play feather headdress***

Walak play is similar to what Heider (1970) describes in *The Dugum Dani*. Children play with and in their physical environment - climbing trees, sliding down planks of wood that have been left to dry in the sun, or playing in ponds and rivers. They engage in pretence, too. One example of this was a group of young boys who "stalked" me with catapults and imaginary bows and arrows, hiding just out of sight in the forest. Walak children play *waik* - a spear skidding game - in just the same way as Heider (1970, 196) records Dani children playing it in the 1960s; during my fieldwork this game went through a spate of popularity. Other play similar to what Heider describes includes batting a small hard bud as Ebel did with Pebet, mock battle, playing



at making cigarettes, making a play headdress with feathers, and capturing an cicada, tying a piece of string to it and letting it fly around before pulling it back in to sit on one's chest or hand.



***A young boy holds his captured cicada***

Children enjoy playing with balloons or bubbles if someone turns up with them and they regularly entertain themselves by singing the songs Ob Anggen children have learned in school. Unlike the Dani children Heider (1979) observed, Walak children also play games, including volleyball, tag, and other games unfamiliar to me, though without any signs of intense competition.

Heider (1970, 193) divides children's play into "those activities which seem to have some ultimate educational effect and those which do not," rightly recognising that most aspects of adult life are reflected in children's play life. Walak children swim, climb trees, chase dogs, roll down hills and try to catch shrimp for fun but they also play at gardening, construction, lighting fires and cooking snacks, they playfully collect firewood, singing, chanting and whooping in imitation of adults, and they hang around the margins of funerals and exchange events playing. These ways of amusing

themselves are educational, in that they are preludes to the adult activities they imitate.

However, I do not find the categorisation of play as educational and non-educational helpful, as it echoes the distinction between autonomous and non-autonomous play made in school (see Chapter Eight). In fact, autonomy characterises all Walak children's play, whether it is educational or not. For example, young children are not pressured to garden, though when they play at gardening, this constitutes part of their learning. It is children themselves who choose to pick up a digging stick and play at gardening, and it is they who transition gradually into more productive gardening. As they get older they are sometimes instructed to garden, but little comment is made on their results and if they are hot and tired, or meet people on the way, they take a break, sit in the shade and talk. Eventually, both their commitment to contribute and their skill level increase. Boys likewise often hang around construction sites, joining in for fun and learning on the job. Some young children just play around the edges, but others watch intently and are included by being asked to pass particular tools. After a while, they are allowed to do small supervised jobs under the instruction of an adult man until eventually they are able to participate independently. This gradual change from young children's activities (which are predominately play-based and are often also a form of learning) to older children's activities (which contribute more to meeting a household's subsistence needs and social obligations) is best understood as a process by which values for equality, reciprocity and social relationships come to bear on children's decisions about how they spend their time and interact with others.

## **Conclusion**

The shadow day data I have presented in this chapter show that as children increasingly acknowledge the obligations others expect them to have, and as they increasingly manage their autonomy in accordance with Walak values, their activities become progressively more productive, both in terms of the material products that result from their efforts and in terms of the relationships that are "produced" - and maintained - by their activities. This increased productivity is partly due to the increased skill that children gain with practice, correction and imitation as well as with

age, strength and stamina, but it is also due to children's changing perceptions of their roles, which shape their choices about how they use their time.

Walak children's autonomy is not absolute; as with all humans, there are limits to their freedom, some of which are age-influenced. For instance, younger children do not have as much choice about where they spend their days as older children do. Children also learn that there are consequences to upsetting others, and that these consequences can even be violent. Just as adults may come to blows if they disagree, so too children are liable to be shouted at, called names, have fists shaken threateningly at them or even be smacked if they behave in ways that are considered unacceptable, such as by upsetting younger children or snubbing people to whom they have an obligation. Bad behaviour can also lead to dire supernatural consequences. Older children and young adults particularly fear displeasing their *ombaye* as these men can wreak havoc with their lives through curses. Children have autonomy, but as with adults this autonomy is mitigated by concern for the consequences of behaving inappropriately.

Nonetheless, as children get older, their roles do not shift through coercion but through innumerable interactions in which they, their friends, their siblings, their parents and other adults are all active participants. Even very young children are treated as autonomous actors and are not usually overpowered, although they may be put under sustained pressure to act in accordance with Walak values. Young children are also taught the importance of their social relationships and are encouraged to begin recognising their relationships with others from when they are babies. These social relationships form the foundation of the first obligations children are expected to prioritise, with pressure to acknowledge others, to share and to reciprocate being put on children long before they are asked to contribute in any substantial way to subsistence activities. In accordance with the pragmatic Walak approach to life, requests for practical assistance are made as and when children's contribution is needed, which means that children with younger siblings are sometimes involved in household chores sooner than those without. Eventually, though, the value of equality informs an expectation that all children make a contribution to meeting their own needs, their household's needs and the needs of others.



The process of children's changing roles is neither smooth nor uniform, as the shadow day excerpts show. Age and gender are important variables when analysing what children do, but other factors like birth order and personality play a big part too. Children demonstrate their independence, exercise resistance to obligations which others pressure them to meet, and negotiate others' demands, shaping for themselves the way that autonomy and obligation affect their activities. Children are influenced by adults who pressure them and they are also explicitly taught, directed and instructed. Through this process of learning, children gradually become competent, contributing members of Walak society and learn the skills, knowledge and values they need to succeed in Walak life.

# Chapter Seven: Are Schooling and Indigenous Education Incompatible?

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In the last chapter, I showed how, through their activities and interactions outside of school, Walak children learn skills, knowledge and values which equip them to be competent and contributing members of Walak society. This learning differs profoundly from the education children receive through Ob Anggen school, which aims to equip children to be competent and contributing members of society in national and international contexts. In this chapter, I summarise some of the differences between Ob Anggen and Walak indigenous education. I then use the lens of children's time use to consider how attendance at Ob Anggen affects children's potential to learn through activities outside of school. Using quantitative data from the time allocation study, interpreted in light of qualitative data from the shadow days and participant observation, I show which of the activities that children who attend school might otherwise be doing are most affected by their schooling. I also briefly consider the validity of using time as a measure of activity in the Walak context and highlight the different concepts of time used in and out of school in Eragayam Tengah. Finally, I consider whether schooling and Walak indigenous education are mutually incompatible.

## **Differences Between Ob Anggen and Walak Indigenous Education**

Much research on indigenous education focuses on differences in content between school-based and indigenous education, highlighting the potential loss of indigenous knowledge that can occur when schooling dominates and obliterates indigenous education. I found that differences in content and pedagogy are important, but that one of the most relevant differences for the question of how schooling can be used to benefit indigenous Papuans without harming them is a difference in values between foreign and indigenous education. This finding emerged as a result of my focus on children's learning outside of school, within which people are more concerned about children's values and beliefs than they are about their skills and

abstract knowledge (see Chapter Six). Here I briefly summarise the differences in content, pedagogy and values that I found between Ob Anggen and Walak indigenous education.

### **Differences in Content**

The most obvious difference between Walak indigenous education and Ob Anggen is the content of that education. One of the most important things that children learn outside of school is social and supernatural knowledge. They also learn the skills that they need to participate productively in the activities that they will eventually be expected to contribute to, such as construction, gardening and pig husbandry. In school, children learn different skills, such as how to read and write and how to use relatively new forms of technology like digital tablets. They also learn systematised knowledge divided according to subject, with different lessons given to topics such as science, citizenship, Bible and mathematics, whereas outside of school, children's learning is not compartmentalised, except by gender. Although most Walak people and all the Ob Anggen staff identify as Christians, the spiritual beliefs children are taught in and out of school differ. Out of school, children are taught the importance of appeasing all the spirits, including the Christian God. In school, children are taught that the widely accepted practices associated with appeasing the spirits are unnecessarily fear-driven.

### **Differences in Pedagogy**

Ob Anggen and Walak indigenous education also employ different pedagogies. Outside of school, social, spiritual, and material activities are integrated. There is no demarcation between work and leisure (see Chapter Eight), between educational and non-educational activities (see Chapter Six), or between incidental and intentional learning (see Varenne, 2007). Children learn through practice, observation, imitation, overhearing, being taught and being corrected (see Chapter Six). Unlike in Ob Anggen, where teachers proactively try to engage, stimulate and entertain children through the learning activities they design, outside of school, children are often left to amuse themselves. Within Ob Anggen, by contrast, the school staff invest considerable effort in deciding what children should learn, when they should learn it, and what kind of

activities should be used for teaching. Ob Anggen uses a play-based pedagogy, and teachers give children a lot more attention and praise than they normally receive outside of school. Learning is an intentional outcome of school activities, and children's learning is structured and controlled by adults through curriculum choice, the design of learning activities, and classroom instruction. In school, children's learning activities are largely non-autonomous. Another important difference is that within school, learning is associated with time-bound targets that are measured through assessments and examinations. Outside of school, children experience pressure to meet their social obligations. In school, they experience pressure to meet their learning targets.

### **Differences in Values**

As I explain in Chapter One, I chose to focus much of my attention in this research on children's education outside of schools, rather than on schools themselves. This led to a realisation that differences in values are among the most important and under-examined of the numerous differences between foreign and indigenous education. Walak children's education outside of school emphasises the importance of social relationships and the values of reciprocity and equality. Children's relational obligations are stressed to them from a young age. They learn to rely on social relations rather than on material goods; they are also taught how to exchange material products to build and maintain social relationships. As befits an egalitarian society, children are pressured to meet the obligations that others deem them capable of, in accordance with their gender and age, but they are rarely, if ever, coerced (see Chapter Six). Children are also rarely pressured by time outside of school. Flexibility is built into their daily activities, just as it is in adult activities (see Chapter Eight).

The values embedded in Ob Anggen are different. Children have some autonomy in Ob Anggen, but submission to teachers and other leaders is valued more highly than autonomy is. Children are certainly not free to wander off whenever they feel like it, and they may be punished if they do not do what their teacher tells them to do during lessons. Nonetheless, within the boundaries of respect for authority, Ob Anggen staff value self-confidence, initiative and ambition. Hard work and self-discipline are also valued highly in school; they are understood to lead to confidence, dignity and strength. In accordance with the meritocratic values of many Europeans

and North Americans, equality of opportunity is also valued in Ob Anggen, though Ob Anggen staff are realistic about the fact that they can only offer schooling to a limited number of pupils. Sacrifice and extreme commitment, especially for the sake of others, are celebrated within school, as is loyalty to team mates and peers, which is more highly valued than loyalty to relatives. Indeed, attitudes which staff called "*suku-isme*" (a playful translation of the English word "tribalism") were sometimes interpreted as nepotistic, discriminatory or prejudiced by the multicultural, multilingual Ob Anggen team. The exception to this rule is the value for the nuclear family, which is foundational to Ob Anggen. Within school, time-discipline and work-discipline are also encouraged; these concepts are foreign to Walak people and do not feature in children's activities outside of school (see below and Chapter Eight).

### **Children's Time Use**

Recognition of differences between indigenous and foreign modes of learning has led to a growing body of research on what indigenous children spend their time in school doing, how relevant and appropriate that is to their lives and futures (for example Bishop, 2003, Bishop and Glynn, 1999, Kaomea, 2005, Nichol, 2011, Porsanger, 1994), and how that use of time in school affects their learning outside of school (for example Levin, 2005). This research asks, as Levin (2005, 473) puts it, "what does being in school do to...children?" An alternative and relevant question is "what does *not* being *out of* school do to children?" In other words, what might children be missing out on, educationally or otherwise, as a consequence of attending school? To what extent does participation in one form of education imply a loss of the potential future associated with the other, and if it does, who gets to choose what future Walak children should be prepared for?

One way of approaching what *not* being *out of* school does to children is to analyse schooling's impact on children's activities and time use. Ohmagari and Berkes (1997) take this approach in their study of the transmission of Cree women's indigenous knowledge and bush skills and highlight that, although the use of children's time is certainly not the only way schooling influences indigenous educational practices, it is a factor. At the time of my fieldwork, children enrolled in Ob Anggen were far more likely to attend school than their counterparts enrolled in the local

state-funded schools were. This difference raises the question of what Ob Anggen children would have spent their time doing if they were not in school, of how much they were still able to engage in those activities despite being in school and of whether some activities were more affected than others. In this section I answer these questions by first showing what children who were not enrolled in Ob Anggen spend their time doing. I then compare non-Ob Anggen children's time use with Ob Anggen children's time use, investigating the differences carefully to see which activities were most affected by schooling and whether the differences are really attributable to schooling. I then consider what my results suggest about what *not* being *out of* school does to children.

### **Non Ob-Anggen Children's Time Use**

Three of my methods produced data on what children who are not enrolled in Ob Anggen<sup>48</sup> spend their time doing during daylight hours.<sup>49</sup> The time allocation study produced quantitative data on how children spend their time within the mapped area, the shadow study I analysed in Chapter Six gave me detailed qualitative data on how sixteen girls, twelve of whom were not enrolled in Ob Anggen, spend their days, and extensive participant observation gave me ample opportunity to observe children in a variety of everyday environments. For this chapter's analysis, I focused only on non-Ob Anggen children aged approximately six to fifteen years, as this reflects the ages of the children who were enrolled in Ob Anggen in 2013-14.

I made 162 observations of non-Ob Anggen children in this age bracket during the time allocation study. These are enough observations to get an overview of what children do, but insufficient to be sure that there were not infrequent activities happening that I did not see (Bernard and Killworth, 1993) or to be confident that observations of large groups doing one activity did not create some distortion in the final results. The 95% confidence bounds of my estimates of frequency (see Table 7.1) are also broader than I would like, meaning that there is an overlap between the

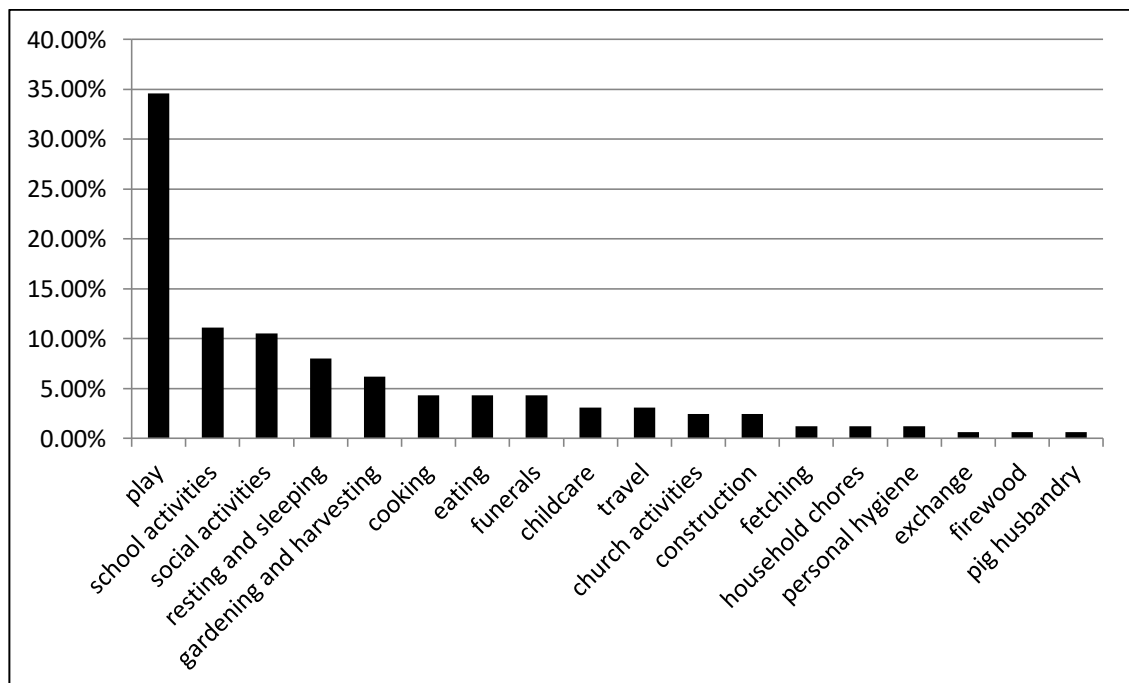
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<sup>48</sup> For reasons outlined in Chapter Three, I grouped children enrolled in state school and children not enrolled in school at all together.

<sup>49</sup> All reported percentages in this chapter are a percentage of observed activities and therefore limited to daylight hours (5:30am - 6:30pm). See Appendix Four for more on why I limited my observations to daylight hours.

estimates of how frequently some activities occur, so these activities cannot be accurately ordered. Consequently, the results from this analysis need to be interpreted cautiously and in light of qualitative data, as I have done in this chapter. I found that the quantitative results are consistent with the qualitative data.

Over a third (34.57%) of the observations of children who were not enrolled in Ob Anggen were of play. This resonates with Heider's (1979, 64) observations of Dani children in the 1960s ("Dani children play a lot"). The next most commonly observed activities (11.11%) were school activities, though 72% of these observations of "school activities" were of a large group of children - not all of whom were enrolled in school - helping to carry a delivery of supplies to one of the state schools. Only 3.09% of the total observations of non-Ob Anggen children were of children actually travelling to and from school or doing homework.<sup>50</sup> In reality, school takes up a very small percentage of non-Ob Anggen children's time.



**Graph 7.1 Non-Ob Anggen Children's Time Use**

Based on spot observation data, n = 162

<sup>50</sup> There were no observations of children in state schools because the state schools were outside of the observation area. I compensated for this by including travel to and from school as "school activities."

Activity	Percentage	95% Confidence Bounds <sup>51</sup>	
play	34.57%	27.24%	41.89%
school activities	11.11%	6.27%	15.95%
social activities	10.49%	5.77%	15.21%
resting and sleeping	8.02%	3.84%	12.21%
gardening and harvesting	6.17%	2.47%	9.88%
cooking	4.32%	1.19%	7.45%
eating	4.32%	1.19%	7.45%
funerals	4.32%	1.19%	7.45%
childcare	3.09%	0.42%	5.75%
travel (that is not otherwise accounted for)	3.09%	0.42%	5.75%
church activities	2.47%	0.08%	4.86%
construction	2.47%	0.08%	4.86%
fetching	1.23%	-0.47%	2.93%
household work	1.23%	-0.47%	2.93%
personal hygiene	1.23%	-0.47%	2.93%
exchange	0.62%	-0.59%	1.82%
firewood	0.62%	-0.59%	1.82%
pig husbandry	0.62%	-0.59%	1.82%

**Table 7.1 Activities of non-Ob Anggen children aged approximately 6-15 years**

Based on spot observation data, n = 162

After the dubiously high category of school activities, the most frequently observed activities in the spot observation were social activities such as visiting others, hosting visitors, spending time talking socially with people from the children's compound, and resting or sleeping (see Table 7.1 for percentages). Resting, which includes children staring into space, watching others, waiting silently for someone, sitting in the kitchen by the fire or fiddling with a phone, made up most of these observations; there was only one observation of a primary school-aged child sleeping during the day. The next most frequently observed activities were gardening and harvesting, cooking, eating, attending funerals, childcare and travel that was not otherwise accounted for.<sup>52</sup> The remaining activities observed (church activities,

<sup>51</sup> These are calculated using Formula (5) as recommended in the analysis of spot observation data by Bernard and Killworth (1993, 210). The formula provides a rough approximation of the validity of spot observation results which accounts for sample size even though, logically, the true frequency for any activity that was observed at least once cannot be below zero, as this formula allows for.

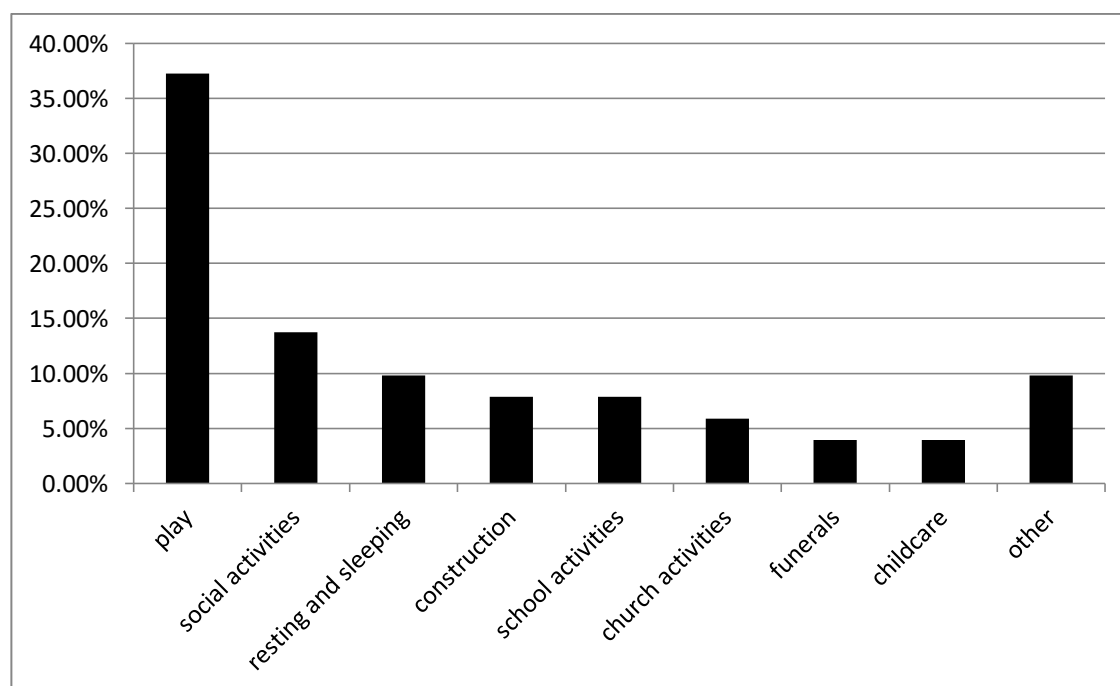
<sup>52</sup> In this analysis most "travel" is subsumed in other activities such as "gardening" and "school activities" (see Chapter Three). When taken as its own activity, travel is actually the second most frequent activity after play, making up 20.37% of all observations of non-Ob Anggen children in this age bracket.



construction, fetching, household work, personal hygiene, exchange, firewood activities, and pig husbandry) each made up less than 3% of the total observations.

### Time Use By Gender and Age Among Non-Ob Anggen Children

When broken down by gender, the most frequent activities for boys aged approximately six to fifteen were play, social activities, resting or sleeping, construction, school activities, church activities, attending funerals and childcare (see Table 7.2 for percentages). The remaining activities (cooking, eating, fetching, firewood and personal hygiene) were only observed once each. Data from participant observation confirms these findings: I frequently observed boys of about six to fifteen years of age playing, socialising, and resting. Boys of all ages attend funerals, though they often play, socialise or hang around the cooking area rather than joining in with the adult men. Boys, especially older boys, also participate in gardening activities and construction, and younger boys frequently hang around construction work and fetch tools or hold pieces in place as instructed. Older boys were sometimes left with younger children to look after, though not as frequently as older girls were.



**Graph 7.2 Non-Ob Anggen Boys' Time Use**

Based on spot observation data, n = 51

Non-Ob Anggen Boys n = 51				Non-Ob Anggen Girls n = 87			
Activity	%	95% Bounds		Activity	%	95% Bounds	
play	37.25%	23.99%	50.52%	play	31.03%	21.31%	40.76%
social activities	13.73%	4.28%	23.17%	gardening and harvesting	11.49%	4.79%	18.20%
resting and sleeping	9.80%	1.64%	17.97%	social activities	11.49%	4.79%	18.20%
construction	7.84%	0.46%	15.22%	resting and sleeping	9.20%	3.12%	15.27%
school activities	7.84%	0.46%	15.22%	cooking	6.90%	1.57%	12.22%
church activities	5.88%	-0.58%	12.34%	eating	6.90%	1.57%	12.22%
funerals	3.92%	-1.41%	9.25%	travel	4.60%	0.20%	9.00%
childcare	3.92%	-1.41%	9.25%	household chores	2.30%	-0.85%	5.45%
cooking	1.96%	-1.84%	5.77%	church activities	1.15%	-1.09%	3.39%
eating	1.96%	-1.84%	5.77%	exchange	1.15%	-1.09%	3.39%
fetching	1.96%	-1.84%	5.77%	fetching	1.15%	-1.09%	3.39%
firewood	1.96%	-1.84%	5.77%	personal hygiene	1.15%	-1.09%	3.39%
personal hygiene	1.96%	-1.84%	5.77%	pig husbandry	1.15%	-1.09%	3.39%

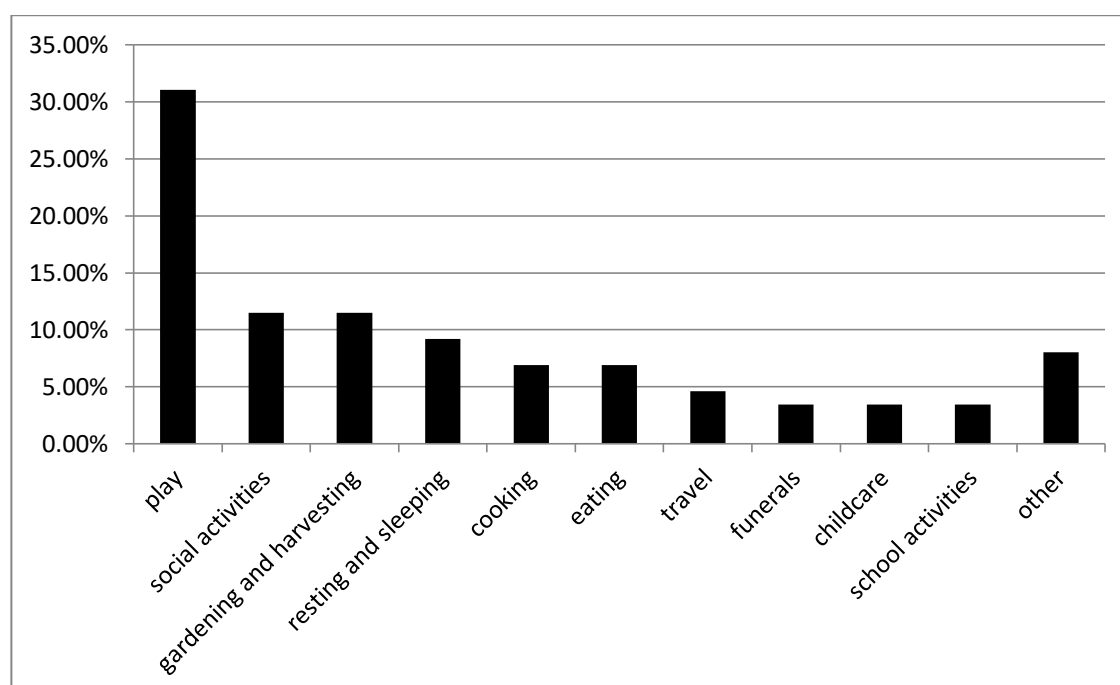
**Table 7.2 Activities of non-Ob Anggen Boys and Girls aged approximately 6-15 years<sup>53</sup>**

Based on spot observation data

For girls of this age the most frequently observed activities in the spot observation were play, social activities, gardening and harvesting, resting and sleeping, cooking, eating, travelling, childcare, attending funerals and school activities (see Table 7.3 for percentages). The remaining activities observed (household work, church, exchange, fetching, personal hygiene and pig husbandry) each made up less than 3% of the observations. The shadow data both confirm these data on non-Ob Anggen girls' time use and illuminate it by showing where the differences within this age group lie. The shadow data suggest that play, the most frequently observed activity for girls in the spot observation, is an activity that younger girls spend much more time doing than older girls. Indeed, in the spot observation about three-quarters (74.07%) of the

<sup>53</sup> The total observations of boys and girls do not add up to the total observations for children as I made some observations of children whose gender I did not know (see Appendix Four, page 327).

observations of girls playing are of children aged 11 or under. The shadow data also suggests that gardening is an activity which older girls spend more of their time doing. As I showed in Chapter Six even younger girls often picked up a digging stick, but older girls, especially girls in the 14-15 age bracket, gardened productively for hours at a time some days. Indeed, a analysis of the spot observation by age confirms this age difference, as 70% of the observations of girls gardening were of girls aged about 12 years or older.

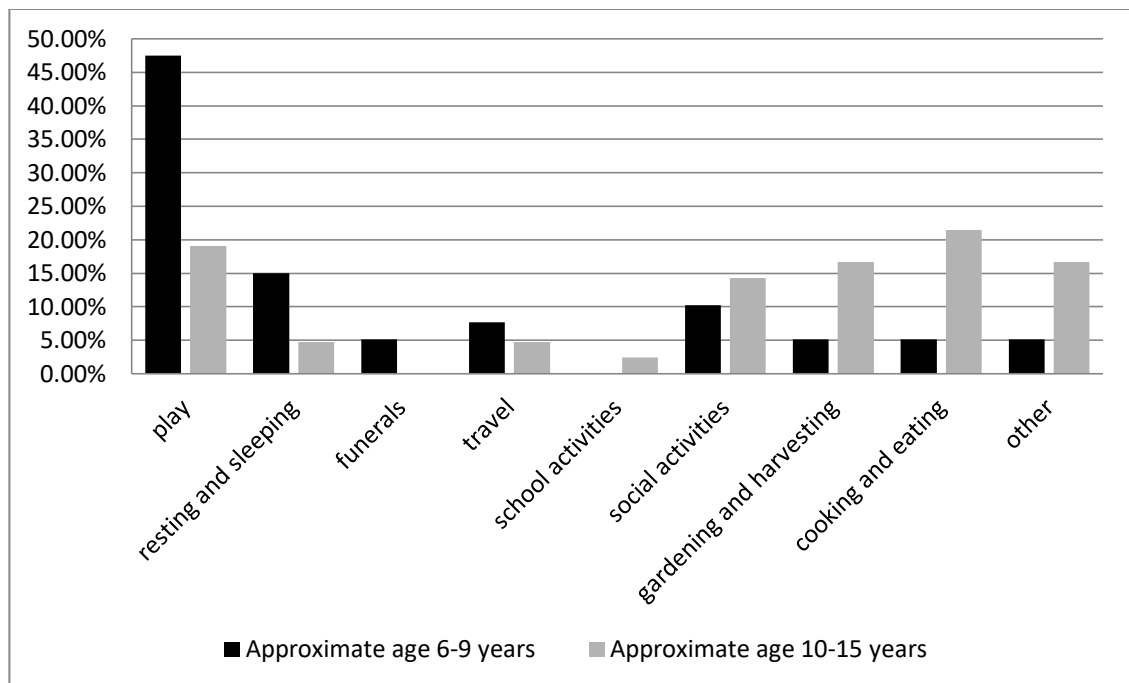


**Graph 7.3 Non-Ob Anggen Girls' Time Use**

Based on spot observation data, n = 87

Social activities featured in the activities of the girls I shadowed at all ages, but older girls engaged in social activities independently, whereas younger children accompanied their mothers in social activities. During participant observation, I noticed that older girls socialise more according to their kinship relationships and obligations, whereas younger girls just socialise with whoever is around (this is, however, usually dictated by their older siblings' and parents' kinship relationships and obligations). Social activities did not make up such a large proportion of girls' shadow days as it did in the spot observation, but this may be due to the fact that social activities happen more frequently in the evenings, by which time I would often have been ushered home by my shadow day hosts.

Rest was another activity observed frequently on shadow days among younger children, and again, this is reflected in the spot observation data: about three-quarters of observations of girls resting or sleeping were of children aged about 9 or younger. On the other hand, all observations of non-Ob Anggen girls cooking in the spot observation were of girls aged about 10 and older, and most (83.33%) were of girls aged about 12 and over. During the shadow study, I noticed that although changes in girls activities happen gradually, a particular transition seems to occur in the 10-11 age category. As Graph 7.4 shows, if the spot observation data are divided into two age categories which divide at this age, the pattern of changing activities that emerged in the shadow data is also evident in the spot observation data.



**Graph 7.4 Non-Ob Anggen Girls' Time Use by Approximate Age in Years**

Based on spot observation data, n = 82

Data from participant observation also confirm that what I learned from the girls I shadowed and from the spot observation is typical. These findings also echo Heider's observation that Dani children participate in adult activities as soon as they can walk, but do not take a full share of them until their mid-teens (Heider, 1979, 47).

## **Conclusions Regarding Non-Ob Anggen Children's Time Use**

The qualitative data suggest that the spot observation is accurate in highlighting play as the most frequent activity for non-Ob Anggen children of primary school age of both genders, and in showing socialising and resting as frequent activities for children as well. The quantitative results for school activities are, as noted, somewhat skewed, and the qualitative data show that at the primary school level, state schooling actually takes up very little of children's time. The spot observation data show childcare as taking between 3% and 4% of children's time use for both genders. The qualitative data suggest that for girls at least, childcare takes up a much higher proportion than this, but that it is often done inattentively, playfully and simultaneously with other activities. This would have made it less prominent in the spot observation data analysis, which only accounts for one "primary" activity. In fact, half of the spot observations of non-Ob Anggen girls that I coded as having both a primary and a secondary activity included childcare as either a primary or secondary activity. It also seems, from the qualitative data, that children spend more time in gardens and at funerals than the spot observation data indicate, but that while they are there children may be playing, socialising or resting rather than gardening or otherwise participating. Indeed, 20.69% of observations of non-Ob Anggen girls are of girls in or on their way to and from gardens, even though in many of these observations the girls were not actually gardening.

Overall, an analysis that considers both the qualitative and quantitative data shows that younger girls spend much of their time playing, resting and in social activities. They are often in and around gardens, funerals and home compounds, where they may get involved in the activities of older children and adult women. Older girls spending more time doing activities like gardening and harvesting, cooking, attending funerals, socialising and doing childcare. Younger boys are not dissimilar from younger girls - they too often accompany older siblings, parents or other relatives, though they are usually with their mother. They too spend a lot of their early years playing, resting and socialising, and they too contribute increasingly to male activities such as exchange and construction as they age, though they tend to do so later than girls.

## Ob Anggen Children's Time Use

Children enrolled in the Ob Anggen school, by contrast with non-Ob Anggen children, spend most of their daylight hours in school activities, which made up 72.09% of observations of these children in the spot observation study. When compared to participant observation data this percentage seems high; I would not have expected to see more than 60% of observations of Ob Anggen children in school, given that school doesn't operate on weekends, and children would rarely spend more than eleven hours a day in school activities, even including travel to and from school, breaks and detentions. I suspect the results from the spot observation data are skewed high because, by chance, I made two observations which included all the school pupils in lessons. This means Ob Anggen "school activities" are disproportionately represented relative to the overall size of the sample. However, this does reflect the reality that the school, as a place that gathers large groups of children in a small area daily, is disproportionately influential compared to other activities in Ikonium. It is rare for any other activity or event to draw as many people together as Ob Anggen school does on a daily basis.

The percentage of all daylight hours in any given week during term time that children enrolled in Ob Anggen actually spend in school activities, including travel to and from school and homework, is probably in the range of 47%-60%.<sup>54</sup> Of this, I would estimate between 35% to 50% of children's time is actually spent in school lessons or detention. This is still far more than the time spent in school by children enrolled in state primary school (see Chapter Four and the data above). Ob Anggen has introduced a dramatically different experience of schooling to Eragayam Tengah.

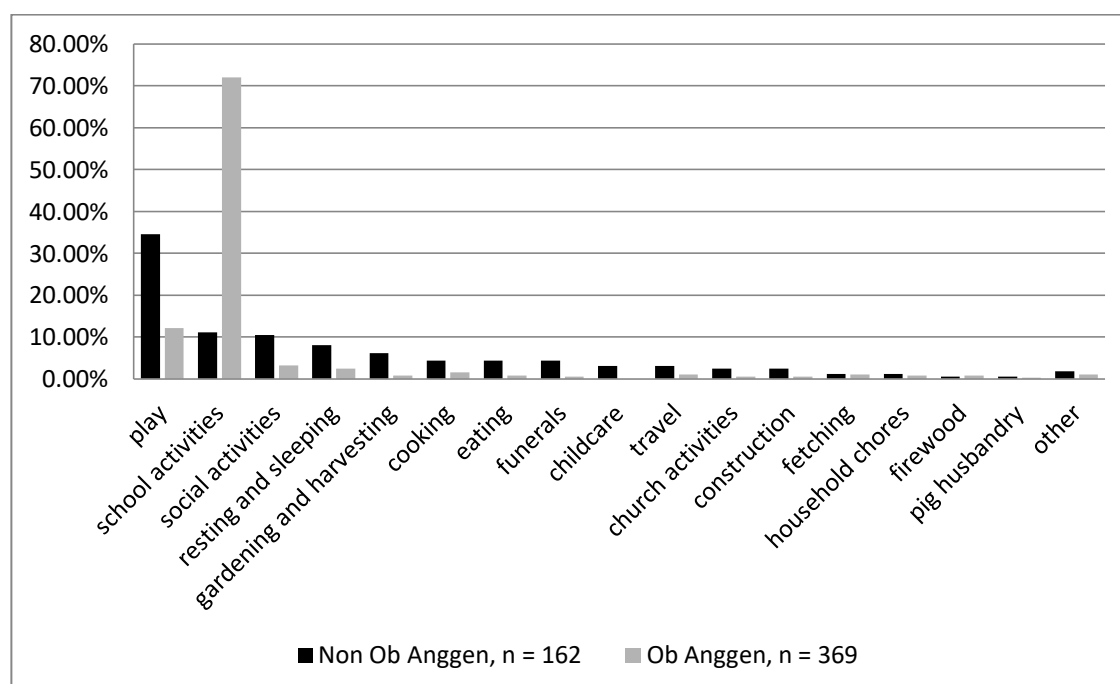
The next most frequently observed activities for Ob Anggen children were play (12.20%), social activities (3.25%), resting or sleeping (2.44%), cooking (1.63%), fetching (1.08%) and travelling (also 1.08%). The numerous other activities observed (eating, firewood, gardening and harvesting, household work, church, construction, attending funerals, being ill, chicken care, dispute and pig husbandry) each made up less than 1% of the total observations of Ob Anggen children.

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<sup>54</sup> In other words, between eight and a half and eleven hours are spent in school activities per weekday, based on thirteen hours of daylight per day.

## Differences Between Ob Anggen Children's Time Use and Non-Ob Anggen Children's Time Use

The activities Ob Anggen children do outside of school seem to be similar to those non-Ob Anggen children do, but as Graph 7.5 shows, they make up a much smaller percentage of Ob Anggen children's overall daylight time use, seemingly due to the large proportion of time taken up by school. Table 7.3 shows that even when broken down by gender, children who are enrolled in Ob Anggen were observed less frequently in all of the activities except school activities.<sup>55</sup>



**Graph 7.5 Children's Time Use by Enrolment in Ob Anggen**

Based on spot observation data

<sup>55</sup> An apparent exception is gardening for boys, because one Ob Anggen boy was observed travelling to the garden. As no other boys in this age bracket were observed in any gardening activities at all, this makes it look like Ob Anggen boys garden fractionally more frequently than non-Ob Anggen boys, but the difference is not statistically valid.

	<b>Non-Ob Anggen, both genders n = 162</b>	<b>Ob Anggen, both genders n = 369</b>	<b>Non-Ob Anggen, male n = 51</b>	<b>Ob Anggen, male n = 239</b>	<b>Non-Ob Anggen, female n = 87</b>	<b>Ob Anggen, female n = 130</b>
chicken care	0.00%	0.27%	0.00%	0.42%	0.00%	0.00%
childcare	3.09%	0.00%	3.92%	0.00%	3.45%	0.00%
church	2.47%	0.54%	5.88%	0.84%	1.15%	0.00%
construction	2.47%	0.54%	7.84%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%
cooking	4.32%	1.63%	1.96%	1.26%	6.90%	2.31%
dispute	0.00%	0.27%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.77%
eating	4.32%	0.81%	1.96%	1.26%	6.90%	0.00%
exchange	0.62%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.15%	0.00%
fetching	1.23%	1.08%	1.96%	1.26%	1.15%	0.77%
firewood	0.62%	0.81%	1.96%	0.84%	0.00%	0.77%
funerals	4.32%	0.54%	3.92%	0.00%	3.45%	1.54%
gardening and harvesting	6.17%	0.81%	0.00%	0.42%	11.49%	1.54%
household chores	1.23%	0.81%	0.00%	0.42%	2.30%	1.54%
resting and sleeping	8.02%	2.44%	9.80%	2.93%	9.20%	1.54%
illness	0.00%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.54%
personal hygiene	1.23%	0.00%	1.96%	0.00%	1.15%	0.00%
pig husbandry	0.62%	0.27%	0.00%	0.00%	1.15%	0.77%
play	34.57%	12.20%	37.25%	12.55%	31.03%	11.54%
school activities	11.11%	72.09%	7.84%	72.80%	3.45%	70.77%
social activities	10.49%	3.25%	13.73%	2.93%	11.49%	3.85%
travel	3.09%	1.08%	0.00%	1.26%	4.60%	0.77%

**Table 7.3 A Comparison of Children's Time Use By Activity**

Based on spot observation data

To assess how valid these differences are I used Bernard and Killworth's (1993) method to calculate the 95% confidence intervals for observations of each activity and then compared the results for children who are and who are not enrolled in the Ob Anggen school, breaking the observations down by gender as well as comparing the two groups as a whole. The results are shown in Tables 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.

In addition to school activities, these data show a valid difference between Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen children of both genders in the amount of time they spend in play, in social activities, in childcare, and in gardening and harvesting. Although the sample size is not large enough to show a valid difference between the



groups for "resting," or for "funerals" the confidence intervals for these activities only overlap by 0.17% and 0.10% respectively, indicating that it is likely that there is a difference between Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen children for these activities too. These results indicate that schooling most affects the activities which non-Ob Anggen children engage in most frequently.

	<b>Non-Ob Anggen Children (approx age 4-15) n =162</b>		<b>Ob Anggen Children (approx age 4-15) n = 369</b>		<b>Valid or Not?</b>
<b>Minimum and Maximum True Frequencies</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	
chicken care	0.00%	0.00%	-0.26%	0.80%	No
childcare	0.42%	5.75%	0.00%	0.00%	Yes
church activities	0.08%	4.86%	-0.21%	1.29%	No
construction	0.08%	4.86%	-0.21%	1.29%	No
cooking	1.19%	7.45%	0.34%	2.92%	No
dispute	0.00%	0.00%	-0.26%	0.80%	No
eating	1.19%	7.45%	-0.10%	1.73%	No
exchange	-0.59%	1.82%	0.00%	0.00%	No
fetching	-0.47%	2.93%	0.03%	2.14%	No
firewood	-0.59%	1.82%	-0.10%	1.73%	No
funerals	1.19%	7.45%	-0.21%	1.29%	No
gardening and harvesting	2.47%	9.88%	-0.10%	1.73%	Yes
household chores	-0.47%	2.93%	-0.10%	1.73%	No
resting and sleeping	3.84%	12.21%	0.87%	4.01%	No
illness	0.00%	0.00%	-0.21%	1.29%	No
personal hygiene	-0.47%	2.93%	0.00%	0.00%	No
pig husbandry	-0.59%	1.82%	-0.26%	0.80%	No
play	27.24%	41.89%	8.86%	15.53%	Yes
school activities	6.27%	15.95%	67.51%	76.66%	Yes
social activities	5.77%	15.21%	1.44%	5.06%	Yes
travel	0.42%	5.75%	0.03%	2.14%	No

**Table 7.4 A Comparison of 95% Confidence Intervals for Non-Ob Anggen and Ob Anggen Children's Activities**

Based on spot observation data, valid differences highlighted in grey

Once broken down by gender (Table 7.5 and Table 7.6) the 95% confidence intervals show a valid difference between Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen girls for gardening and harvesting, but not for cooking. The results also show a valid difference

for eating, though I have no other evidence that Ob Anggen girls spent less time eating than non-Ob Anggen girls. For boys, school activities and play were shown as valid differences. However, having analysed the spot observations according to such precise demographics the 95% confidence intervals are necessarily based on relatively small numbers of observations and therefore bound wide ranges. Thus, for example, there is no valid difference between the groups of boys for construction, even though there was a 7% difference in frequency of observations between the two groups. No valid difference is shown for rest, social activities, childcare or funerals for either gender. I do not attribute this to there being no difference between the two groups in these activities, but to the sample sizes being too small to support this analysis.

Minimum and Maximum True Frequencies	Non-Ob Anggen Girls (approx age 4-15) n = 87		Ob Anggen Girls (approx age 4-15) n = 130		Valid or Not?
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
childcare	-0.39%	7.28%	0.00%	0.00%	no
church activities	-1.09%	3.39%	0.00%	0.00%	
cooking	1.57%	12.22%	-0.27%	4.89%	no
dispute	0.00%	0.00%	-0.73%	2.27%	no
eating	1.57%	12.22%	0.00%	0.00%	yes
exchange	-1.09%	3.39%	0.00%	0.00%	no
fetching	-1.09%	3.39%	-0.73%	2.27%	no
firewood	0.00%	0.00%	-0.73%	2.27%	no
funerals	-0.39%	7.28%	-0.58%	3.65%	no
gardening and harvesting	4.79%	18.20%	-0.58%	3.65%	yes
household chores	-0.85%	5.45%	-0.58%	3.65%	no
resting and sleeping	3.12%	15.27%	-0.58%	3.65%	no
illness	0.00%	0.00%	-0.58%	3.65%	no
personal hygiene	-1.09%	3.39%	0.00%	0.00%	no
pig husbandry	-1.09%	3.39%	-0.73%	2.27%	no
play	21.31%	40.76%	6.05%	17.03%	yes
school activities	-0.39%	7.28%	62.95%	78.59%	yes
social activities	4.79%	18.20%	0.54%	7.15%	no
travel	0.20%	9.00%	-0.73%	2.27%	no

**Table 7.5 A Comparison of 95% Confidence Intervals for Non-Ob Anggen and Ob Anggen Girls' Activities**

Based on spot observation data, valid differences highlighted in grey

	Non-Ob Anggen Boys (approx age 4-15) n = 51		Ob Anggen Boys (approx age 4-15) n = 239		Valid or Not?
Minimum and Maximum True Frequencies	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
chicken care	0.00%	0.00%	-0.40%	1.24%	no
childcare	-1.41%	9.25%	0.00%	0.00%	no
church activities	-0.58%	12.34%	-0.32%	1.99%	no
construction	0.46%	15.22%	-0.32%	1.99%	no
cooking	-1.84%	5.77%	-0.16%	2.67%	no
eating	-1.84%	5.77%	-0.16%	2.67%	no
fetching	-1.84%	5.77%	-0.16%	2.67%	no
firewood	-1.84%	5.77%	-0.32%	1.99%	no
funerals	-1.41%	9.25%	0.00%	0.00%	no
gardening and harvesting	0.00%	0.00%	-0.40%	1.24%	no
household chores	0.00%	0.00%	-0.40%	1.24%	no
personal hygiene	-1.84%	5.77%	0.00%	0.00%	no
play	23.99%	50.52%	8.35%	16.75%	yes
resting and sleeping	-1.41%	9.25%	-0.32%	1.99%	no
school activities	0.46%	15.22%	67.16%	78.44%	yes
social activities	4.28%	23.17%	0.79%	5.07%	no
travelling	0.00%	0.00%	-0.16%	2.67%	no

**Table 7.6 A Comparison of 95% Confidence Intervals for Non-Ob Anggen and Ob Anggen Boys' Activities**

Based on spot observation data, valid differences highlighted in grey

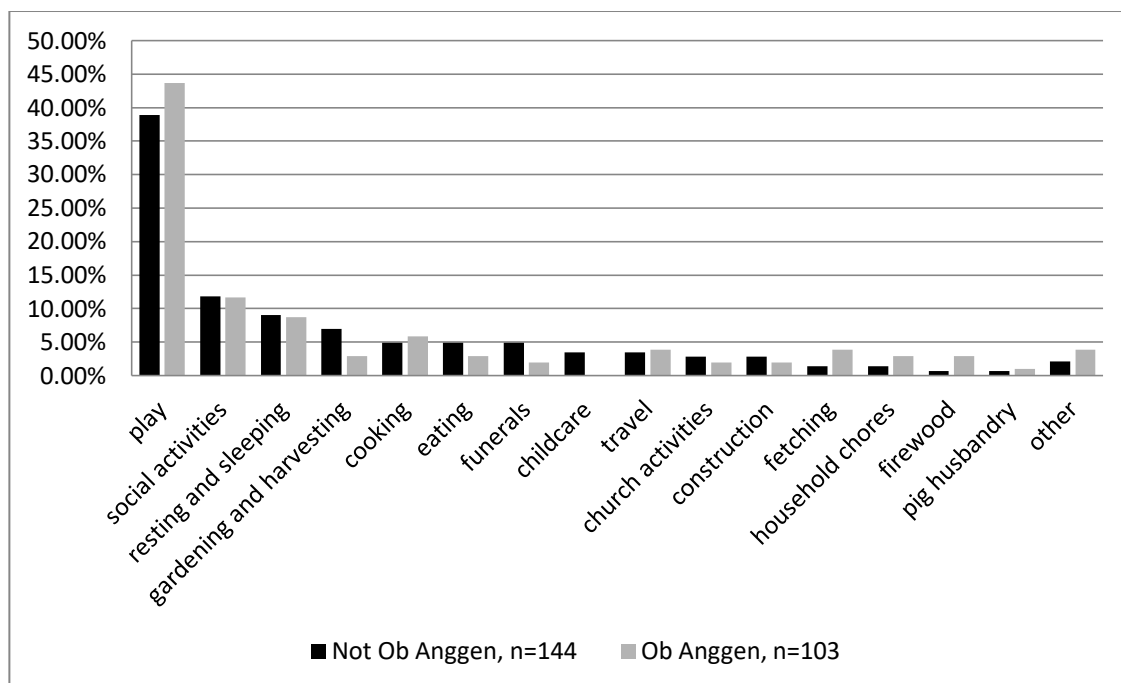
I include these results, however, as they show that the differences in time spent in school activities, in play (which is shown to differ in every analysis), and, for girls, in gardening and harvesting are so large that they are valid even with relatively small numbers of observations. Differences in social activities and in childcare are also valid when the observations are not divided by gender. It seems likely that there are real differences between the groups for both genders in the time spent resting and attending funerals, although there was a very small overlap in the confidence intervals for these two activities. Differences in cooking, for girls, and in construction, for boys, are not supported by the quantitative analysis. However, Ob Anggen children were observed doing them less frequently than non-Ob Anggen children, and given the proportion of time school activities takes for Ob Anggen children, it is likely that these activities are affected, albeit not as profoundly as activities such as play.

## **Are These Differences Really Attributable to Schooling?**

The analysis so far suggests that much of what Ob Anggen children would be doing if they were not attending school is playing. They would also be spending more time socialising and resting. It suggests that girls who attend Ob Anggen are missing out on time spent gardening, harvesting and possibly cooking and that boys attending Ob Anggen may be missing out on time spent on construction. However, this is only relevant to my argument if it is attributable to schooling, and not to a third factor which affects both children's enrolment in Ob Anggen and accounts for the differences in their time use when compared to non-Ob Anggen children.

One such factor could be gender. There were a disproportionate number of boys enrolled in Ob Anggen when compared with the wider population - girls made up a third of Ob Anggen's student population but half of this age group in Ikonium. This seems an unlikely explanation, though, as several of the differences between the two groups remain even when analysed by gender. I have no evidence to suggest that there are other characteristics of the Ob Anggen population which would account for the differences in time use between the two groups, but in order to ascertain whether the differences are in fact due to schooling, I compared Ob Anggen children's time use to non-Ob Anggen children's time use with school activities excluded.

Graph 7.6 shows the differences between the two groups' time use when school activities are excluded. A comparison of this with Graph 7.5, in which school activities are included, shows that once the influence of schooling is discounted, the differences between the two groups all but disappear. The three activities Ob Anggen children were most frequently observed doing when school activities were excluded were the same as those non-Ob Anggen children were most frequently observed doing: play (43.69%), social activities (11.65%) and resting (8.74%). Play, social activities and resting were also the three most frequently observed activities for Ob Anggen children on weekends (37.50%, 17.50% and 15%) and on weekdays with school activities excluded (39.13%, 8.70%, 8.70%). The percentages of times these activities were observed echo non-Ob Anggen children's time use very closely. In fact, the only valid difference between the two groups, when analysed with school activities excluded, was a difference in childcare.



**Graph 7.6 Children's Time Use with School Activities Excluded**

Based on spot observation data

The consistency across these results, especially when taken in conjunction with the previously reported results, strongly suggests that play, socialising, and resting are the three activities most frequently engaged in by children of this age group, and that the differences shown earlier between the two groups in the amount of time each group spends on these activities is attributable to schooling.

### **Mobility and Time Use**

Although there is no evidence that Ob Anggen children are treating their now more limited time outside of school differently from non-Ob Anggen children, it does seem that schooling affects some activities differently than others. This is because on school days, enrolment in Ob Anggen affects time use outside of school in one important way - it restricts children's mobility. Although school finishes at about 3pm, most gardening, funerals, community events, socialising, work parties and construction activities cease sometime between mid afternoon and dusk, when people who are not planning to stay the night start to travel home. Thus, there often was not much point in Ob Anggen children going to an event, work party or garden after school finished unless it was close to either the school or to where they were sleeping that night.

This explains why there is not a valid difference between how much time Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen girls spend cooking, even though there is for gardening and harvesting. When schooling is excluded, there is a much bigger difference between what percentage of their non-school time Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen girls spend gardening and harvesting (5.26% compared to 11.90%) than there is for the percentage of their non-school time they spend cooking (7.89% compared to 7.14%). This is because after school finished Ob Anggen girls were much more likely to go back to their cooking house, where they might well end up cooking, than they would be to set off for a garden.

Mobility is also an explanation for why childcare is the only valid difference between non-Ob Anggen children's time use and Ob Anggen children's time use when schooling is excluded. In fact, Ob Anggen children were never observed doing childcare as their primary activity during the spot observation, although I know from my shadow study, from participant observation and from secondary spot observation data that they did do childcare on non-school days. On school days, however, Ob Anggen children would be unlikely to do any childcare except playing with younger children in their kitchens and compounds, as by the time they got out of school, younger children would already be with someone else.

Some activities, like construction, funerals and exchange events - activities which are particularly important to adult men and which boys would often attend - could and often did happen near to the school, but could also happen further afield. I sometimes passed Ob Anggen pupils walking from school towards an event, asking me and everyone else they passed on the path going in the other direction whether we knew if food had yet begun to be distributed at the event they were heading to.

In short, activities that happened close to home compounds were less affected by schooling, whereas activities that happened further afield were more affected. The main effect of school on activities outside of school hours seems, so far, to be driven by the mobility limitations of schooling.

## The Validity of a Time Allocation Study

The use of time scarcity as a metaphor for the scarcity of one's life and one's labour is foundational to concepts of economising in capitalist societies (Smith, 1982) and is closely linked with the concept of work (see Chapter Eight for more on the concept of work). It is not, however, a universal concept (Sillitoe, 2010a, Smith, 1982, 2015). Human activity and time are not related in the Walak context in the same way that they are in industrial capitalist societies. Whilst times are set aside by Walak people, both regularly and sporadically, to be used for particular activities (such as sleeping, eating, weddings and funerals), categories of activity are not ordered by or allocated to parcels of time as they are in many capitalist societies. There is no time allocated to "work," "rest," "socialising" or "learning." Exceptions are church, Sunday as a day of rest, market days and schools, but these are all introduced institutions and people treat the periods of time to which they are allocated flexibly. Furthermore, though activities take time, they are not conceived of or evaluated in terms of time. Schwimmer (1979, 302) notes that as productivity is not seen as a direct result of labour investment for Orokaiva people, "time is a highly inappropriate measure of useful activity in Orokaiva gardens" (see Chapter Eight for more on this in the Walak context).

This raises the question of how appropriate a time allocation study is for understanding Walak behaviour. A time allocation study employs distinct categories of behaviour which are not all indigenous categories. It cannot record behaviours that are not visible, such as important conversations that happen while travelling, does not account for important interpretations of events such as supernatural influences, and measures activity by time, a measure which Walak people themselves would not use. Throughout this chapter, I have described children as "spending" time, which itself invokes the idea of time as a resource that can be "spent," "wasted" or "used," and this is not an accurate reflection of Walak conceptions of time.

Certainly, time cannot be used as a proxy for importance in analysing Walak activities (indeed, whether it can be used in this manner anywhere is debatable). In this case, the results of my spot observation study are not meaningful if interpreted without consideration of Walak categories and concepts. However, it was by

attempting an understanding of the impact of schooling on children's time using the conceptual tools I had that I was able to see how inapplicable they were. The time allocation results do show what *not* being *out* of school does to children in terms of the activities that they miss out on as a result of spending so much time in school, but they also show a conceptual gap between the concepts the study employed and those Walak people use to think about their own behaviour. Distinguishing distinct categories of activity and finding them less useful than I would have wished for describing Walak behaviour emphasised the fluidity and flexibility of Walak activities to me and highlighted important differences between schooling and children's activities outside of school. Using time as a measure frustrated me for its inability to capture the importance of Walak activities that were barely visible in the spot observation study, such as supernatural affairs, exchange, and pig husbandry, and trying to reconcile these differences highlighted to me how important it was that I focus not just on the different activities being undertaken in and outside of school but also on the different concepts being employed by the different education systems. Those insights have proved valuable in pursuing an understanding of how schooling relates to Walak children's futures.

### **Time-discipline and Schooling**

The Ob Anggen school employed a concept of time order typical to formal education. Lessons and breaks were allocated to particular hours of the day, school always started and ended at the same time, pupils were required to arrive on time, staff kept timesheets to claim their pay, and teachers had ambitious goals for what they wanted to achieve within the time that they had with the children. As Ob Anggen took children into four grade levels upon opening, teachers often felt that they were playing catch up with the sister school in Bokondini which had opened several years earlier, and while I was there the hours of the school increased as teachers tried to ensure students could perform at a level appropriate to their grade. The actual practice of teaching was not pressured or rushed and much time was given to singing, games and play. Teachers sometimes left students to their own devices if they had to attend to something out of the classroom, and if a student did not finish an activity they were allowed to leave it to the next day. The end of a year was a deadline, though



- if a student had not learned enough to progress to the next grade, they would have to repeat the year.

The development of time-discipline in schooling has particular political and economic roots many of which are related to the development of industrial capitalism (Thompson, 1967). In the article 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,' Thompson's (1967) traces the connections between the development of time order and the associated concept of time-thrift during the industrial revolution with multiple other social, political and economic factors of that particular historical period in England, including increasing division of labour, the possibility of increased synchronisation of labour, increasing supervision of labour facilitated by large-scale machine-powered industry and by the use of bells and clocks, the linking of time to money and the sermonising of religious moralists and schooling. Schooling, in this context, was one way to socialise children into habits of time-discipline, efficiency and industry, and even to get children used to fatigue in order to appropriately prepare them for labour-discipline (Thompson, 1967).

One other non-industrial institution lay to hand which might be used to inculcate "time-thrift": the school. Clayton complained that the streets of Manchester were full of "idle ragged children; who are not only losing their Time, but learning habits of gaming," etc. He praised charity schools as teaching Industry, Frugality, Order and Regularly: "the Scholars here are obliged to rise betimes and to observe Hours with great Punctuality." (Clayton, 1755, 19, 42-43, cited in Thompson, 1967, 84)

Although schools such as Ob Anggen which are introduced to Papua are not directly modelled on the schools popularised in England during the industrial revolution, Thompson's history of time-discipline is valuable for analysing schooling in Papua because it shows that the concepts of time order, time scarcity and time-thrift which are now so embedded in formal education systems around the world were developed in particular social, historical and economic contexts in response to specific problems and values. They are neither universal nor ahistorical. When schools started training children in time-discipline much of their life outside of school did not employ the same concepts of time that the school did: "Once within the school gates, the child entered the new universe of disciplined time" (Thompson, 1967, 84). So too it is in contexts in which concepts of time scarcity and time-discipline are imported through

schooling. Thompson (1967, 93) argued that industrial societies were, by the time he wrote his article, all "marked by time-thrift and by a clear demarcation between 'work' and 'life,'" the latter of which developed in conjunction with the former. He also argued that these concepts would spread to the developing world.

To some degree, Thompson was right - these concepts have been exported. However, just as they were not introduced in England without resistance,<sup>56</sup> so too their introduction to new social environments in the name of development often meets resistance. For example, Smith (1982, 2015) describes the multiple and sometimes ambivalent responses Kragur villagers had to the introduction of the concept of time scarcity. Some saw greater time order as appealing, either as a personal opportunity for leadership or as a potential way of accessing the wealth and success they perceived Europeans as having, but attempts to increase efficiency were necessarily attended by constraints on autonomy and flexibility, and Smith (2015) records that these values have so far proved resistant to change.

Walak children did not seem to be very influenced by Ob Anggen's approach to time either. Before school, children arrived early and played or hung around the school yard until it was time for them to line up to enter school. This could be interpreted as a response to the time-discipline imposed on the school day by Ob Anggen; maybe students arrived early because they were afraid of being late. I did see children rushing down to school or being rushed to get ready by their parents who worried that they were late and this rushing seems to reflect a time-thrift mindset, or at least an adaptation to the school's demand that school start on time. On the other hand, the leisurely way most children arrived, talked among themselves and played until it was time for school to start is similar to the leisurely way Walak people normally gather for other events such as pig feasts. A lack of a time-thrift mindset should not be equated to a tendency to be late; if one does not see time as a limited resource which might run out, then one is at leisure to arrive early and wait around for something to happen.

During school hours, I did not observe any resistance from pupils to teachers' approaches to time, but the data on how children spend their time outside of school

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<sup>56</sup> For example, the linking of time to money which, according to Marxism, featured in the exploitation of workers was also then used by workers to revolt (Thompson, 1967).

show that they are not treating their now more limited free time differently from children who are not enrolled in Ob Anggen, suggesting that Ob Anggen pupils have not yet internally adopted the concepts of time which order their school days. There is no evidence, either from the spot observation or from any of my other methods, that Ob Anggen children feel pressured by the lack of time they have outside of school, or that they were treating time as a scarce resource which they needed to manage differently as a consequence of the time they were spending in school. Neither they nor any of their parents ever made any comments to that effect in my presence, and as the spot observation data show, Ob Anggen children spend most of their time outside of school playing, socialising, and resting - the very activities that it seems they would have spent most of their time doing had they not been in school. To illustrate, one Ob Anggen school girl (age 8-9) whom I shadowed walked home after school with two school friends and me before going in to her household's empty cooking house where she sat, in complete silence (except for the few times I spoke to her) for two hours before I left. During those two hours she transferred some salt I had brought for her household from the plastic bag it came in to the salt pot, went to the toilet, made a small fire, methodically tore some pictures out of a piece of paper, and then rolled the pictures into a ball which she wrapped in a strand of rice sack and a plastic bag (as far as I know, this latter activity had no purpose other than her amusement). Apart from those few activities, she sat staring at me, staring at the fire pit or poking the fire. When I asked her if we were going to go to the garden, she said "later."

Walak people are not currently attempting to adopt foreign concepts of time scarcity, but the children who are in school are being acculturated to a new relationship between time and activities. So far, Ob Anggen children seem to be accommodating these changes by adapting to the constraints on their behaviour which allow for greater efficiency in school and employing no concepts of time scarcity outside of school. It is too early to tell whether one of these values will prove internally dominant for the children in the long run.

### **Are Schooling and Indigenous Education Incompatible?**

What does *not* being *out of* school do to children? It causes children to miss out on opportunities for learning that would otherwise occur through play, social activities,

gardening, harvesting, childcare, going to funerals and joining in with construction. It limits children's ability to engage with the frequent exchange events, funerals and weddings that happen, due to schoolchildren's reduced mobility and due to the fact that children are not allowed to take days off school for these events (unless they are for very close kin). Although it may seem that all children do at these events is play, socialise and rest, they are actually important for learning how to participate in socio-political exchange, for children beginning to fulfil their own kinship obligations, and for learning specific skills such as how to properly construct a men's house and how to sing funeral dirges (see Chapter Six). If Ob Anggen is incompatible with Walak indigenous education, then Walak people face the unenviable dilemma of whether to allow their children to enrol in schooling, and by doing so risk contributing to the destruction of Walak beliefs, values, livelihoods and language, or whether to keep them out of schooling and risk further marginalisation and exploitation in the so-called era of globalisation.

Most Walak people do not see schooling and Walak culture as being in competition with each other though. On the contrary, nearly all the Walak people I knew were united in their support and enthusiasm for Ob Anggen and many of them saw access to schooling as part of their pathway to self-determination. In this they are not alone (see, for example, Manuelito, 2005, May and Aikman, 2003, Munro, 2013, Nichol, 2011, Smith, 2005, World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, 1999). I had an explicit conversation with three adult men about the potential incompatibility of schooling and Walak "culture" (*budaya*, an Indonesian word which is used by Walak people and which, in their usage, particularly references social and supernatural knowledge). All three told me that school knowledge did not threaten *budaya*, but that if it did, it would be more important for children to retain the latter than gain the former. One man said that the ideal combination was to have both, but that people could not succeed without *budaya*. The other two men told me that people cannot let go of their *budaya*. As one of them (who had obtained a position as a salaried teacher in a government-funded school) put it, "we would be scared if children forgot...we prioritise *budaya*." He gave examples, such as that a child who let go of their *budaya* would not know what to call a relative, but reassured me that

children are taught such important information from a young age. "From when children are young, they accompany their parents," he explained. He, like the man I had spoken to previously, also explained to me that without *budaya* a person cannot succeed, whereas without school knowledge one can be successful, for example by being watchful over the land (*jaga dusun*). One of the men I spoke to expressed incredulity at the suggestion that school knowledge and *budaya* could be in competition. He argued that school knowledge would be pointless if the people who gained it gave up their *budaya*, as schooling could not then fulfil its purpose (for more on Walak perceptions of schooling's purpose, see Chapters Eight and Nine). However, he had no concerns about this hypothetical outcome as he did not believe children were in danger of forgetting their *budaya*; indeed, during our conversation he pointed out examples of children learning *budaya* from older relatives (in this case, he was pointing to children participating in cutting up pigs for the feast at the school dedication).

Although Ob Anggen staff do recognise that there are differences between their goals and schoolchildren's parents' goals, they also tend to see children's schooling as being complementary to, rather than in competition with, children's learning outside of school. In fact, except where their beliefs are in direct conflict with Walak beliefs (as, for example, in supernatural beliefs), Ob Anggen staff in Eragayam Tengah celebrate Walak ways of life and proactively try to prevent ethnocide in their practices. During my fieldwork, staff members were privately and publically vocal in their praise for Walak people, who they variously characterised as generous, hard-working, strong and community-minded. They saw Walak parents as partners whose contributions were critical to the school's ongoing success (see Chapter Five). They respected and participated in Walak ways of making decisions and working together, accepting correction when they made cultural *faux pas*. In accordance with their value for the nuclear family, they were adamant that schooling could never replace the education children gain from their parents, a point that was repeated multiple times in parents' meetings.

Walak people do not think of time as a scarce resource which must be allocated, prioritised and economised, but even if the impact of schooling is analysed

according to children's time use, the evidence suggests that Walak parents and Ob Anggen team members may be right in thinking that a school education and the learning that happens outside school are not mutually exclusive. Children who attend school do miss out on time spent in the activities that constitute their indigenous education, but most start school at an age when they already have a good foundation in Walak values, skills and knowledge. Even once they are enrolled in school, Ob Anggen pupils continue to participate in activities with their relatives outside of school on weekends and during holidays. For most children school makes up only about half of their waking hours in a week during term time. In other words, over the course of a year schoolchildren are spending more time learning outside of school than they are learning in school, even though they are spending less time in indigenous education than their unschooled and state-schooled peers are. Furthermore, the ways that Ob Anggen children spend their time doing outside of school hours are very similar to those of non-Ob Anggen children.

Ob Anggen had only been operating for about a year and a half by the time I left Eragayam Tengah, but at that point I found no noticeable differences between schoolchildren and non-schoolchildren in their indigenous knowledge and competencies. So far it seems that attending Ob Anggen has not proved to be disastrously detrimental to children's indigenous education. This is not to say that Ob Anggen has managed to eliminate the risks to indigenous language, culture and knowledge that schooling presents. For example, the choice to use the local Indonesian instead of Walak in school may put the language at risk (though my Walak friends do not think it will). Furthermore, Ob Anggen children are not just learning new knowledge in school, they are learning new concepts and values associated with foreign livelihoods. Some of the values taught in Ob Anggen deliberately and explicitly undermine indigenous beliefs - particularly supernatural beliefs - so while children may retain indigenous skills and knowledge deemed innocuous by school teachers, social and supernatural beliefs which violate Ob Anggen values are likely to be threatened. I noticed that Ob Anggen children seemed more embarrassed and self conscious when indigenous supernatural beliefs came up in conversation with me than non-Ob Anggen children did. However, Walak parents assert that their children can learn new

knowledge without forsaking indigenous knowledge, and, the data does suggest that, in some arenas at least, this is true.

## Chapter Eight: The Purpose of Schooling and the Concept of Work

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In the last chapter I argued that Ob Anggen school education and Walak indigenous education are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The evidence so far suggests that Walak children are able to learn different kinds of knowledge from different learning environments concurrently. Although schooling demonstrably removes children from their indigenous education, there are a number of factors which Ob Anggen can (and in some cases, already does) put in place to mitigate some of the risks of indigenous language, knowledge and identity loss that schoolchildren face. These steps do not remove the threat that schooling poses to indigenous education but if they allow for the possibility of children "successfully learning within two different, separate education systems simultaneously, learning to use different knowledge systems in different domains, to switch fluently between them according to context, and ultimately to be able to draw from each to enrich the other" (Shah, 2015, 249), then they move us forwards significantly in resolving the dilemma I presented in Chapter One. Children, in theory at least, could be equipped by different education systems both for rural life and for participation and self-determination within national and international domains.

In practice, there are many challenges to achieving such bi-education (see Shah, 2015 for a general discussion of these challenges in the context of Papua). For example, some of the knowledge and values that children learn in school directly contradict the knowledge and values they learn through their indigenous education, particularly when it comes to spiritual beliefs. The term "bi-education" is power-neutral, implying that two different systems of education can co-exist harmoniously. In reality, the global dominance of school-learned knowledge and the positional benefits of being educated through schooling make it likely that schooling will dominate in a bi-educational system. Munro's (2009, 2013, 2015) work also makes it clear that schooling does not consistently lead to benefits for indigenous Papuans. Furthermore, it is likely that the longer schooling continues, the more of an impact it will have on children's indigenous education. The data I have collected provides insight into the



impact of schooling on children in the first two years after Ob Anggen was introduced to Eragayam Tengah, during which time the eldest children enrolled in the school were about fifteen years old and were in Class Three; how successful these children's emerging bi-education will be on an ongoing basis remains to be seen.

A further problem also remains. As I have shown, Walak indigenous education is organised according to different concepts to Ob Anggen school education. For example, indigenous education is largely divided according to gender, but social, spiritual, economic and material activities are integrated. By contrast, Ob Anggen school activities are divided by subject matter, but not by gender. Walak values, such as those of equality, autonomy, reciprocity, the importance of appeasing the spirits and supporting social relationships (with nuclear family members and more broadly) also differ from the values which shape Ob Anggen, such as those of submission to direction, hard work, personal sacrifice, team loyalty, the importance of *not* appeasing the spirits, and prioritising the nuclear family. These differences between Walak and Ob Anggen concepts and values do not just inform the different education systems in which they are embedded. They also lead to different understandings of the purpose of schooling.

Walak assertions about the purpose of schooling appear, superficially, to be similar to those promoted by Ob Anggen. However, the concepts and values which inform understandings of the purpose of schooling differ significantly. This leads to significant and problematic differences between Walak and Ob Anggen visions of schooling success. In this chapter, I take one concept - the concept of work - and use it to demonstrate how differences in values and concepts shape the different assumptions underlying assertions about the purpose of schooling. Although the concept of work is by no means the only concept or value which informs Ob Anggen and wider international development understandings of the purpose of schooling, and which is foreign to Walak people, it provides a pertinent example to highlight the importance of interpreting Walak assertions about the purpose of schooling in light of their own concepts and values.

## **The Purpose of Schooling and the Concept of Work: International Development Perspectives**

The purpose of schooling is rarely addressed directly in international development promotional and fundraising literature, nor made explicit in development policies or goals. Instead, schooling is generally presented as incontrovertibly beneficial to children and their communities (see Chapter One). This is evident in schooling success or failure being generally measured in terms of schooling itself: schools are deemed somewhat successful if pupils attend them and more successful if students demonstrate that they have learned what the schools teach by passing the examinations that school administrators devise. Thus, as I showed in Chapter Four, the markers of state schooling's failure across Papua and West Papua include poor school attendance, gender disparity in enrolment, poor rates of literacy, poor accessibility and affordability of schools, teacher absenteeism, poor training and support for teachers, poor examination results, and a small number of students progressing on to higher levels of schooling.

However, as I showed in Chapter One, schooling does have broader implied purposes within international development. Specifically, the purposes of schooling are to increase access to the numerous benefits that a school-based education is assumed to provide (such as, for example, reducing poverty, facilitating self-determination and increasing employment - see Chapter One, pages 1-5). The problem with associating schooling with such seemingly uncontroversial benefits is that embedded in many of the most widely accepted beliefs about the purpose of schooling are concepts, such as the concept of work, which international development policy makers and practitioners assume are universal but which, in fact, are not.

At its broadest, work can be defined as the expenditure of energy (Harrison, 1979), or, nearly as inclusively, as activities that are transformative of nature (Grint, 1998). Whilst humans from all cultures expend energy and transform nature, these all-encompassing definitions bear little resemblance to the specific category of activities demarcated as "work" within the English language. Even within "Western industrial capitalist societies," (Wadel, 1979, 366) work is not a stable category; its meanings

change according to discipline, context and speaker (Fagin, 1979, Grint, 1998, Wadel, 1979). Work is variously defined in capitalist contexts as the expenditure of energy which produces something of value (Elkan, 1979, Wallman, 1979), which is motivated by something other than pleasure (Grint, 1998, Wadel, 1979), which is associated with certain types of incentive, such as pay (Grint, 1998, Wallman, 1979), or which is applied to "the production, management or conversion of the resources necessary to livelihood" (Wallman, 1979, 7).

According to Thompson (1967), a division between "work" and "life" developed with the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe and North America during the industrial revolution, in part through the spread of time-discipline (see Chapter Seven). Prior to this, he argues, there was "no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day'" (Thompson, 1967, 60, see Clayre, 1974, Parkin, 1979 for more on the history of work). "Work" came to refer to those activities in which one's autonomy is constrained and one's efforts are disciplined in order to achieve a valued or necessary outcome. This concept of work does not have universal application (Schwimmer, 1979, Shah, 2016, Sillitoe, 2010a, Smith, 1994, Wadel, 1979, Wallman, 1979).

The changes wrought over the course of European and North American history have not just transformed the concept of work; they have also linked it to schooling. This has affected European and North American perspectives on the purpose of schooling. Schooling has come to be seen as a way of preparing children for future work, in part through being an age-appropriate activity that teaches children to work, as well as protecting children from age-inappropriate labour. I shall examine each of these perspectives on the relationship between schooling and work in turn.

### **School Prepares Children For Future Work**

The idea that the purpose of schooling is, in part, to equip children for the work they will do as adults has been prevalent for many centuries, but a number of social, political and economic changes in Europe and North America cemented the connection. The Protestant Reformation supported the idea that schooling should prepare children for future work, whether in the clergy or civil service. As Weber (1930) argues, the Protestant Reformers promoted hard work as a sacred duty. This

was achieved in part through the concept of a vocational "calling" which might apply to any vocation, in or out of the church (Giddens, 2001, Weber, 1930). It is noteworthy that the missionaries who first introduced schooling to western New Guinea were Lutherans and Calvinists, both mentioned by Weber as influential in inculcating the Protestant work ethic in Europe.

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the idea that the purpose of schooling should be primarily to advance the welfare of the state rather than to promote religion began to be advanced, particularly in France and North America (Cubberley, 1920a). The Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the American War of Independence paved the way for schooling to become a state institution whose primary purpose was to establish the values of equality, liberty and democracy, and to ensure that children were prepared to participate in public life. As one writer (quoted in Cubberley, 1920b, Reading 258 a, 417) put it, schooling's purpose was "to develop in [children] republican manners, patriotism, and the love of labor, and to render them worthy of liberty and equality." Later, campaigns for wider rights to suffrage coincided with demands for universal access to schooling. The Industrial Revolution followed the Enlightenment in Europe and North America and with it came a growing value for efficiency, diligence, discipline, and, simply, labour (Thompson, 1967). Schools were seen as a way to inculcate these values in children. A need for more specialised skills also led to an increased focus on training for work in schools. As Cubberley (1920a, 791) argues, "As the industrial life of nations has become more diversified, its parts narrower, and its processes more concealed, new and more extended training has been called for to prepare young people for the work of life..." Schools thus began to be seen as a way of preparing children for adult work in a democratic society.

This understanding of the purpose of schooling remains prevalent. The idea that one of the purposes of schooling is preparation for adult work is explicit in Target 4.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship" (United Nations, 2016c, Target 4.4). Munro (2009, 2013, 25) employs the same idea to criticise the "inflated possibilities" of schooling in Papua. She says:

Gaining employment in the public-service sector is an ideal outcome of education, and an outcome that could illustrate the transformative power of schooling, but Dani men and women face serious challenges in achieving this outcome. Papuans have often been excluded or removed from employment, a practice that dates back to the previous Dutch colonial state (Munro, 2013, 40-41).

As a mission school, the purpose of Ob Anggen, like that of the early missionary schools in Papua (see Chapter Four), is partly to teach Christian beliefs and morals. The Ob Anggen director is also overtly committed to using schooling as a tool of development. He highly values hard work, and the Ob Anggen schools emphasise this value with pupils and their families (see Chapter Five). The schools are not geared towards preparing children for any specific form of employment, but the Ob Anggen philosophy is continuous with the educational philosophies advanced in Europe and North America: implicit in much of Ob Anggen's work is the idea that part of the purpose of schooling is to prepare children to be active, diligent and moral participants in an increasingly globalised social and political world. Ob Anggen schools therefore intentionally emphasise skills and values (such as time management) which will enable students to succeed as higher education students, employees and political or religious leaders within and beyond Indonesia (see Chapter Five).

### **School Teaches Children to Work**

Schools also prepare children for work by teaching them to work. They do this by presenting learning activities in ways that emulate the time-constrained, disciplined, non-autonomous patterns associated with adult work. Thus, the demarcation between work and non-work activities which Thompson noted is mirrored in school activities: the activities that occur in lesson time are categorised as children's work and the activities that occur during break times are categorised as play or leisure. This is the case even when classroom activities are those that children might otherwise think of as play. Chapparo and Hooper, who researched Australian 6-7 year old schoolchildren's categorisation of their own activities in relation to the concept of "work," write:

The children's sense of autonomy was strongly linked to their categorisation of tasks as work. Freedom of choice characterised play and rest. Lack of choice characterised work. When the children were asked, "*can you choose*

*what work you do?"* they responded with a resounding *"no!"*. Scott for example, classified painting as work because *"when you paint you cannot do anything else – you can only paint – you have to do it"*. (Chapparo and Hooper, 2002, 296)

The work/non-work dichotomy is also evident in the language teachers use in schools. In both English and in Indonesian - and hence, in Ob Anggen - learning activities in school are referred to as "school work" (*pekerjaan sekolah*) and learning activities for the child to do at home are called "homework" (*pekerjaan rumah*). Teachers also use the language of work to instruct children in their school activities, telling them for example that "It's time to work now," or encouraging them to "work hard now" so that they can have a break later. Even the idea that autonomous play is a "break" suggests that the most important activities children do are those that are categorised as "work." The implication is that learning is children's labour - necessary, compulsory, sometimes arduous, and non-autonomous. Ob Anggen has a far more play-oriented pedagogy than the state schools do, and its teachers do, as Chapparo and Hooper (2002, 300) recommend, create learning environments which are stimulating and interesting to children. Nonetheless, the category of "work" is embedded in the organisation of Ob Anggen school days. As Chapparo and Hooper (2002, 300) assert, " While adults may not actively strive to teach children that certain tasks are work, children have ample opportunity [in schools] to assimilate the adult perspective of work."

### **School Prevents Children From Working**

In international development, a third link between schools and the concept of work can be found in the idea that schools are the antidote to child labour (Nieuwenhuys, 1996). Just as education, usually through schooling, is a fundamental human right according to the liberal egalitarian international development perspectives which are currently most prominent (see Chapter One), so too, as the United Nations' International Labour Organisation puts it, "Child labour is a violation of fundamental human rights..." (International Labour Organisation, 2016b). The idea that schooling is the appropriate alternative to child labour also emerged as a result of the industrial revolution, during which protests to child labour arose in tandem with demands that children be entitled to enrol in schools (Cubberley, 1920a). Learning in

schools thus came to be viewed as appropriate children's work, in contrast to labour in factories, which was associated with dangerous working conditions, exploitation and long hours. The relationship between child labour and schooling is reciprocal: child labour is considered damaging in part because it keeps children out of school (International Labour Organisation, 2016b) and schooling is considered beneficial in part because it keeps children out of the labour force (Nieuwenhuys, 1996).

Ob Anggen schools do not cite protection from child labour as part of their purpose, nor have I ever heard one of the Ob Anggen teachers frame any Walak children's activities outside of school as a form of child labour. In fact, the Ob Anggen director frequently emphasises his belief that it is more important for children to spend time with their families than it for them to attend school. However, the fact that schools have become established as "legitimate spaces for growing up" (Nieuwenhuys, 1996, 242), in implicit contrast to damaging alternatives such as idleness, labour, or even promiscuous rascal behaviour, strengthens the idea that enrolment in schooling is a child's right. Ob Anggen enjoys support for its endeavours within international development, mission, and American social circles as a result of this widespread idea, even though the organisation does not promote the idea itself.

As these three examples show, the concept of "work" as a type of activity which is demarcated from other activities, which is motivated by necessity or obligation rather than pleasure, which produces valuable outcomes through disciplined effort, and in which one's autonomy is usually constrained, has come to be embedded in schooling through political, social and industrial changes in Europe and North America. This concept has affected European and North American understandings of the purpose of schooling which have in turn affected international development agendas. The idea that schooling prepares children for work, in part by turning their learning into work, and in implicit contrast to other, inappropriate, forms of work is now so widely accepted that it is rarely examined. An examination of this idea is essential, however, in order to answer the question of why state schooling appears to be failing so disastrously in the Papuan highlands, and in order to consider how schooling can better be used to benefit indigenous Papuans. An examination of

this aspect of the purpose of schooling begins with an examination of the inapplicability of the concept of work to Walak activities more broadly.

### **The Inapplicability of the Concept of "Work" in Melanesia**

The concept of work, as many researchers have argued and evidenced (see for example Schwimmer, 1979, Shah, 2016, Sillitoe, 2010a, Smith, 1994, Stent and Webb, 1975, Strathern, 1988, Waddell, 1972, Waddell and Krinks, 1968, Wagner, 1981), does not translate neatly into Melanesian understandings of human activity. Melanesians certainly do expend energy in "the production, management [and] conversion of the resources necessary to livelihood" (Wallman, 1979, 7) but they do so in ways which preclude a description of their activities as "work": which resources they consider necessary to their livelihoods, how they conceive of the process of production, and how they apply their energy to their activities all differ from the connotations invoked by the concept of work. If work involves the production of something of value, then work in the Melanesian context can be, as Wagner (Wagner, 1981, 24-25) argues, "anything from weeding a garden to taking part in a feast or begetting a child."

### **Productive Social Activities**

Positive social relations are highly valued and, in most Melanesians' eyes, necessary to their livelihoods, so the need continually to "produce" these relationships can be accompanied by a greater sense of commitment, obligation and even worry than the production that occurs through subsistence activities such as planting, weeding or harvesting (Sillitoe, 2010a). Smith (1994) explains how for Kragur villagers attendance at any communal gathering to accomplish a task is more important than the energy expended on the task, as attendance is what most contributes to the harmonious social relationships Kragur villagers perceive as essential to their wellbeing. If anyone does not participate or sits aloof from such a gathering people get concerned about the supernatural repercussions that may result. People who seem to outsiders to just be sitting around idly may, in fact, be making an important contribution to an activity simply by having shown up. Smith (1994, see also Smith 2015) also points out the difference between many Western societies in which institutions are formed and time is demarcated for activities such as dealing with



disputes, illness and children's education, and Melanesian societies in which many of these activities occur informally in ways that may look like people resting, being idle or socialising. "Work" cannot meaningfully be carved off as an activity separate from sociality in any context - even in industrialised societies people often work to be part of the community (Wadel, 1979) - but in Melanesia, where positive social relationships are understood to be so integral to survival, it makes even less sense to categorise the energy expended on maintaining and negotiating one's social relationships as distinct from the energy expended on subsistence activities, labelling one "leisure" and the other "work." Both are understood by Melanesians to be productive activities that demand effort but that are worthwhile and necessary.

This is equally true for Walak people, for whom the relationships which are continually produced and reproduced by social activities are relied upon and valued more than material products are (see conversation with Genk Yikwa, Appendix Six, page 354). Thus one can defer building a women's house for one's wife and rely upon relatives for shelter, but one cannot defer attending a close relative's funeral. One man, who was trying to construct a kitchen for his mother during a period when many people died in quick succession, commented that he was frustrated that he could not get on with construction because he kept having to go to funerals. By doing so, he portrayed construction as an activity which he had more autonomy over than funeral attendance. On another occasion I overheard a woman who had just been told of yet another death say to a friend, "I've just come from a funeral. What am I going to take to this funeral?" As this comment shows, the exchange of wealth, especially pigs, is an important part of this social "work" for Walak people, as for many New Guinean highlanders. At funerals, which are one site of such exchanges, kin gift pigs, rice, sweet potatoes, money and other valuables to the hosts, some of which men will distribute through the funeral feasts which guests and hosts eat together. These gifts are remembered and reciprocated as part of the complex web of exchange transactions so central to Walak society.

Although socio-political exchange between men is the climax of this transactional activity, Walak women participate in exchange and invest in "producing" relationships too. Their social activities include hosting, visiting, and small scale

reciprocal exchange transactions between households. Women give produce from their gardens, fruit from a trip to the pandanus gardens further down the valley, cooked food for a new mother or cooked food at a funeral or other event. They also privately distribute some of the harvest they have contributed to outdoor earth ovens at public events, giving the rest to the men in charge of overall distribution among the groups of guests. Both men and women also exchange labour, but as with Kragur villagers, the social obligation being met by doing so is more prominent in their conception of the activity than the actual labour task is. These various social activities are often enjoyed and are not always engaged in out of a sense of pressure, but nor are they treated lightly. Exchanges are never forgotten and the obligation to reciprocate is felt keenly, not only because of the competitive nature of socio-political exchange and the way it affects social standing among men, but also because it is in this way that Walak people produce, affirm and reproduce the relationships in which security and success are understood to be rooted.

### **Productive Supernatural Activities**

The supernatural is also considered to be crucial to people's livelihoods and essential to the production of anything of value in most parts of Melanesia. If fishing is work for Kragur villagers, so too is asking the ancestors or the Virgin for assistance (Smith, 1994). If planting was work for Trobriand Islanders, so too was performing the "magical rites" which made the tubers grow (Malinowski, 1921, 5). Indeed Schwimmer (1979, 301-302) argued that according to Orokaiva people in Papua New Guinea's Northern Province, it is the ancestors who "do the actual producing in the garden;" people's jobs are to plant, protect, be watchful, have harmony in the family, and ward off sorcery. Walak people also saw this "technical as well as...magical watchfulness" (Schwimmer, 1979, 301) over the land to be part of their responsibility. Land that is abandoned of such watchfulness becomes dangerous - a person who walked into such an area would be likely to get sick - so spiritual watchfulness over the land is an important obligation that at least some of the people connected to it must fulfil.

Ritual activities are integral to both subsistence activities and social activities. For example, when a government project to build a new road through Eragayam Tengah began, a pig feast was held to placate the spirits (*aiyerek*) being displaced. I

was told that the *aiyerek* live in the earth, deep enough that gardeners and rooting pigs do not disturb them, but that with the heavy equipment coming in, moving rocks and displacing large amounts of earth, they would be disturbed. Pig feasts needed to be held to prevent disaster from occurring. Examples of the type of disaster that could otherwise be expected included the heavy machinery breaking down, or the public transport vehicles that later used the road overturning and crashing. A feast was held on a Saturday, broken on Sunday for church, and then continued on the Monday. Everyone I spoke to agreed that the *aiyerek* would not peacefully find another place to live unless pigs' blood was shed, but there was some debate about whether it needed to be shed in all the areas that the road would go through ("it is supposed to be..." one friend told me) or whether (as someone had asserted at the feast) this one event, at which four notably large pigs were killed and to which people from all the areas the road would go through travelled, was sufficient. The feast was also apparently used for various negotiations that related to the road, such as a discussion about how much compensation people whose homes and gardens were destroyed would receive, and a negotiation with the Walak man employed by the government and allegedly in charge of the project about what could be gained through his position (could, for example, the heavy machinery sent to build the road be used to improve the local volleyball field while it was here?). This feast, in which the social, supernatural and material aspects of life were integrated in the production of value is an example which is typical of Melanesian cultures in general and Walak culture in particular. It seems counter-intuitive to describe it as work and people certainly were not coerced into attendance. On the contrary, Ob Anggen schoolchildren rushed up the hill to the feast as soon as school was out on the Monday to see if they could make it on time and score some pork! On the other hand, it was indisputably an expenditure of energy deemed necessary, in which resources were managed in the attempt to produce something of value. It was productive activity.

### **Productive Subsistence Activities**

The activities undertaken in Melanesian societies which might most typically be thought of as work by a Westerner are subsistence activities such as gardening, harvesting and construction. Yet the way Walak people approach such activities, and

the way they conceive of the processes of production within them belie straightforward categorisation; Walak subsistence activities have as many parallels with everyday Western definitions of leisure as they do with those of work. Sociologists Young and Willmott (1973, cited in Wadel 1979) undertook social research in East London to find out how people distinguished between work and leisure. They concluded that there were three crucial criteria for defining leisure: pleasure, lack of pay, and freedom. It is instructive to apply these criteria to Walak subsistence activities like gardening and construction.

Although people do not get paid for it, gardening is necessary for Walak people's livelihoods and it would be strange to argue that people garden for pleasure. In fact, some ethnographers from other parts of the highlands have described women's gardening and domestic tasks as "drudgery" (Meggitt, 1964, 220, Strathern, 1972, 152) and as "long, tedious and lonely" (Heider, 1970, 23). Stent and Webb (1975, 523) though, argue that Papua New Guinean gardeners,

"do not consider their work, hard though it often is, to be sheer drudgery. Thus it would be misleading to assume that work is necessarily a source of disutility; up to a point it is generally a source of pleasure. In Western terms, a Papuan New Guinean's attitude towards his gardening is more like that of an amateur rose-fancier, than, say, that of a commercial market gardener. Under such circumstances it is reasonable to assume that there is a considerable range of working hours per day over which individuals would prefer the pleasures of working their gardens to remaining idle in their villages."

Which of these contrasting perspectives, then, is the best characterisation of Walak people's approach to gardening, an activity upon which they depend for their subsistence? Young children *only* garden for pleasure, treating the gardening as a form of play (see Chapter Six). Slightly older girls sometimes treat gardening as a break from other activities, as the example (in Chapter Six) of Towmow using gardening as a break from childcare shows. Adults and older children, on whom the burden of productive gardening rests, varied amongst themselves and from day-to-day in how much they enjoyed their activities. Sometimes, they could garden uninterrupted for hours on end in solitary silence (see for example Wasnonk in Chapter Six). Other times, they seemed to take pleasure in the socialising and camaraderie that often accompanies gardening. Walak gardening is incontrovertibly an effortful and sometimes strenuous activity and

women and older girls did occasionally complain to me, as they did to Strathern (1972), about their hard work, sweating in the hot sun to maintain large areas of land on steep slopes (using the Indonesian, not Walak), but these complaints seemed to me to be most frequently given in the spirit of legitimising an activity which they take pride in. It would be unfair to underestimate the effort that subsistence gardening requires, but my Walak friends did not give me any reason to characterise their efforts as tedious, lonely drudgery, nor did they characterise it as such themselves.

Construction, whether of cooking houses, sleeping houses or fences, is often enjoyed, perhaps even more so than gardening is. Although it too demands energy and application, I never heard men or boys bemoan it and whenever I stopped by while construction was in progress the men participating were in high spirits, either joking and laughing with each other, or, if alone, seemingly engrossed in the flow of their efforts. The only construction work that I heard discussed resentfully was that which was communally required in relation to an institution, such as the clearing of land or building of a fence for the school, and even then the resentment arose from accusations that certain people were not pulling their weight rather than from the labour itself.

Undoubtedly there is variance among Walak people in how much pleasure they take in gardening or construction but even if it could be evidenced that these activities were universally enjoyed, it does not follow that these activities are engaged in *for* pleasure. Many people in contexts where the concept of "work" applies well enjoy their work; the distinction between work and leisure is between activities which are undertaken for pleasure as supposed to out of obligation. Gardening is relied upon for sustenance and construction provides shelter, so Walak people must engage in both activities in order to survive. As such, in this respect the activities are more like Western definitions of "work" than of "leisure," even if they are, at times, pleasurable work.

Despite this, I observed in neither Walak gardening nor construction the pressure or sense of obligation which is implicit in the concept of work. One reason for this is that Walak people are able to produce a surplus of what they need without resorting to rushing or pressuring their activities. Walak gardeners, like the Wola of

Papua New Guinea, "produce beyond what they need to subsist, generating a surplus invested in wealth that circulates in all-important socio-political exchanges" (Sillitoe, 2010a, 354-355). Sweet potatoes, for example, were eaten at home, given to kin uncooked, cooked and shared with visitors, donated to church, cooked to feed all kinds of work parties, contributed to funerals and pig feasts, piled high at harvest feasts, occasionally sold at markets, and fed to pigs without ever seeming to be in short supply (see also Ploeg, 1969, 11).

Shortages can sometimes occur although they did not during my fieldwork. At the time of writing the highlands of New Guinea are facing a drought which has severely affected people's sweet potato harvests in some areas (Bourke, *et al.*, 2015, Bourke, *et al.*, 2016). Major droughts are not common (Bourke, 2010) but do happen at regular intervals as a result of El Niño events in the Pacific Ocean and can be severe, especially for those living at high altitudes and in areas without much access to cash markets or government services (Allen, 2015a, b, Allen and Bourke, 2001). Highlanders have proven themselves to be resourceful in the face of these times of scarcity, and have used strategies such as changing their diets, planting along river banks, migrating to lower or to urban areas where relatives were living, and using whatever cash they or their relatives have available to buy imported food to save themselves (Allen, 2015a, Allen and Bourke, 2001), but some have still suffered and died, especially when they could not access imported food (Bourke, *et al.*, 2016). Despite this tragedy, however, the hunger that results from drought cannot be addressed by increased labour, except perhaps for very short periods of time. Such shortages do not result in a greater general time pressure on gardening and the point remains that the energy Walak people invest in gardening normally produces an abundant harvest.

The flexible residence patterns of Walak people ensure that there is more than enough shelter for the population, too. Although men do consider themselves obligated to contribute to the construction both of the structures needed for their household and those of their kin, they do not view this obligation as an onerous pressure and in practice there are always alternatives if any particular man delays. It is impossible among the Walak that anyone would end up without shelter as a result of a man's inactivity. One of my friends, for example, slept in someone else's sleeping

house nearby her kitchen as her husband had not built one for her. This was a source of gossip among the other women, but it was not a unique situation and the man himself seemed in no hurry to change the situation.

The fact that individual inactivity does not tend to lead to scarcity is in part because the exchange network weakens the direct link between labour and subsistence. For example, although household members do eat directly and primarily from the gardens they have planted and harvested, they also eat a lot of produce that comes from others' gardens which is shared with or gifted to them through exchange.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, people do not necessarily sleep in houses they have built themselves. For example, men from a particular area all sleep in one men's house which they may or may not have helped construct. Women, as I have already noted, may sleep in a relative's women's house if their husbands have not built them their own women's houses. I have even known one friend partition off part of her kitchen and sleep in that for a while. Such flexibility is typical and greatly reduces the pressure on any one individual or household at any given point in time. Labour itself is also shared and exchanged, so no activity is ever completed through one person's labour alone. Thus whilst it is true that gardening and construction are activities that support a household's material wellbeing, it is also true that neither an individual nor a household are ever entirely dependent on their own labour. This is an aspect of the centrality of relationships and the extent to which Walak people rely on social relationships for their wellbeing.

Of course, it is crucial not to underestimate the importance of reciprocity in exchange. People receive because they participate in exchange, or, to put it another way, because they are related. Thus the food received by a household is related to the food given from that household's harvest to others. A person who stopped reciprocating even though they had the means to do so would be badly thought of, and might even be threatened with violence. There are two important points to note though. Firstly, there is temporal flexibility built into the exchange system, as reciprocations do not need to be made immediately. In some cases, they may be made

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<sup>57</sup> I did not measure what percentage of the food that an individual or a household consumes comes directly from what they harvest, but I would like to do so in the future. Sillitoe (1983) has collected some data on this for the Wola in Papua New Guinea.

years later.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, people who are less able or less competent at contributing to exchange transactions - such as those who are old, those who are blind or otherwise physically disabled, and even foreign anthropologists - are all well provided for. Certainly such people are expected to, and do, participate to whatever extent they are able, and people like me who were relatively incompetent at managing their exchange relationships can be roundly told off if they do not behave appropriately, but it is nonetheless inconceivable that anyone would be put in a position where they had nothing to eat.

This is fascinating in the context of understanding "work." In industrial capitalist societies "work" usually refers to the labour on which workers and their households depend directly. Thus there is an inherent pressure in work: it may not always be literally true that if you do not work, you do not eat, but a direct correlation between a worker's labour and his or her material wellbeing is assumed for most of the population.<sup>59</sup> In the UK, for example, welfare is meant to provide for those who cannot work, it is generally seen as shameful to depend on extended family and friends, and foodbanks are a last resort for those who have found that, without work and its attendant pay, they really do have nothing to eat. Each of these exceptions proves the rule of independence: people are expected to provide for themselves and their dependents and failing to do so can lead to dire circumstances. Even the idea of a pension affirms this value of independence; workers are meant to pay into a fund whilst they are still working which will support them when they are unable to work any longer. The corollary of this value is that what a worker has earned is hers to enjoy; this allows for inequality to blossom in a way which is abhorrent to egalitarian societies' values.

By contrast, although it may be tempting to think of Walak people as relating more directly to their subsistence than workers in capitalist societies, as Walak people depend less on the intermediary of money, in fact their subsistence, lifestyles and

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<sup>58</sup> This has long been recognised in anthropology as a feature of some kinds of exchange (see Sahlins, 1972, though note that Sahlins' typology of reciprocity associates temporal flexibility with minimal pressure to reciprocate, but Walak women say that there is pressure to reciprocate gifts made months or years earlier).

<sup>59</sup> Nobility who inherit the means to live an affluent lifestyle without needing to work are in the minority.



wellbeing are much less directly related to their labour than industrial capitalist workers' are, because the exchange network acts as a more diffusive intermediary than money does. The products of one's labour are not therefore directly relied upon as entirely as a worker's pay is in a capitalist system. What *is* relied upon is one's exchange networks. Relationships are more highly valued and esteemed than accumulated material wealth, so it is not surprising that fulfilling social obligations is usually attended by more pressure than are gardening and construction.

Furthermore, as already noted, Walak people do not view abundance as resulting solely from their labour. As with the Orokaiva (Schwimmer, 1979), success or lack of success does not depend on the amount of time spent in the gardens. On the contrary, a poor harvest is more likely to be attributed to a supernatural issue than to anything else, even when people are not confident about exactly what the supernatural issue is. For example, while one church leader was explaining to me the process of growing and harvesting pandanus fruit, he noted that there had not been the usual harvest of the fruits in the previous season. Perhaps, he suggested to me, this was because people had upset God. The belief that provoked spirits can wreak havoc on the results of people's subsistence activities further shifts pressure from subsistence activities to other activities, such as living in such a way that keeps God and the other spirits well-inclined to bless instead of to curse people.

There are at least four reasons, then, that Walak subsistence activities such as gardening and construction are marked by an absence of the pressure which is usually associated in Western cultures with work. Firstly, these activities regularly yield a surplus that exceeds people's physical needs and that surplus is mostly invested in exchange rather than in an attempt to accumulate material wealth. Secondly, temporal flexibility is built into the exchange system, such that a person is able to call in favours when needed and to reciprocate to others when able. Thirdly, the relationship between labour in subsistence activities and people's physical needs is more diffuse in an egalitarian exchange system than it is in a capitalist system. Fourthly, productivity is not viewed by Walak people as entirely dependent upon physical human effort - it also depends on the spirits.

Each of these four reasons also support the high value Walak people have for individual autonomy. In gardening, for example, even the time it takes to produce a surplus of sweet potatoes allows for a significant amount of flexibility which both adult women and older girls regularly avail themselves of. This flexibility and the autonomy it facilitates is further supported by the fact that the exchange system allows people's physical needs to be met even during times when garden produce may be poor, and by the fact that produce quantity is not perceived to be tied solely to the time women invest in physical labour. Consequently, women go to the gardens when they choose, rest or socialise at will, and return to the compound when they are ready. This is not to say that there is no obligation associated with gardening nor that anyone imagines they can subsist without an investment in gardening and other subsistence activities. Women could not simply abandon their gardens, nor would they return home from the gardens with an insufficient harvest to meet their household's physical and social needs. Gardening is an obligation, but it is marked by sufficient flexibility that people's autonomy is not overly constrained. If something else interesting is happening on a particular day, which it frequently is, women go to the gardens earlier in the day and stay for a shorter period of time so that they can join in with the event.

Fagin (1979) argues that a critical characteristic of a leisure activity is control over what one does, but Walak people have autonomy in all their activities, even those which might otherwise seem more like "labour" than "leisure." Heider (1979, 48) noted that when he was doing his fieldwork, Dani people were sometimes judged by outsiders as lazy, due to their seemingly laidback attitude to labour. "If someone worked for me," he records, "or helped me with my research, it was very much at their pleasure and whim." The attitude Heider describes, which he attributes to a remarkable self-sufficiency, simple material tastes and an economy that demands little in the way of material goods (Heider, 1979), is as observable among the Walak as it is among the Dani. It is not a symptom of laziness; Walak people are industrious, productive and engage voluntarily and willingly in activities that require a substantial commitment of energy and effort. In fact, the results of the spot observation suggest that both adult men and women spend, on average, just over twelve of their thirteen

daylight hours<sup>60</sup> engaged in productive activities.<sup>61</sup> Their laidback attitude to labour is instead attributable to a very high value for autonomy, which Walak people share with other Melanesians (see for example Sillitoe, 2010a, Smith, 1982, 1994, Waddell and Krinks, 1968), and to a flexibility which stems from the way they perceive, value and manage their activities.

The fact that Walak subsistence activities share defining characteristics with both "work" and "leisure" serves to demonstrate how poorly such categories fit Walak activities. In fact, even the classification of activities with material products necessary to livelihoods as "subsistence activities" is problematic as, from a Walak perspective, social, supernatural and material activities all contribute to people's subsistence. This is not to say that Walak people do not distinguish between activity and rest. They have a word for rest (*tarwaruwok* in the first person plural) as well as a verb (*eruwok* in the first person plural) which is used in material, supernatural and social contexts to invite people to "work," "do," "make" or otherwise contribute to achieving a goal; it was even the verb used to tease my husband that he should really get to "work" on producing that most valued of "products" - descendants! Walak people do exert themselves, do engage in productive activities which they would rather not do, do socialise for pleasure and do rest. They do not, however, categorise some of their activities in which they apply their efforts to the production of that which they value and rely upon as "work" and other such activities as "leisure." As Waddell and Krinks (1968, 69 cited in Sillitoe, 2010a, 364) put it,

"in societies where labour is not specialised and subsistence production dominates, the social and economic threads are closely interwoven. All actions may be considered economic in that they are concerned with the 'maximization of satisfactions,' while the close association of the networks

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<sup>60</sup> 12.17 hours for women based on 267 observations and 12.19 hours for men based on 176 observations.

<sup>61</sup> This includes social activities. To compare my results with Sillitoe's (2010a, 347-349) results, I also coded the spot observation data as closely as I could to his categories, in which social activities are categorised differently. This resulted in an average of 11 hours engaged in activities for women, and 10.56 for men - a result similar to Sillitoe's result of about 10 hours a day for both genders. Note that non-daylight activities for both Walak men and women were normally socialising, eating, resting, sleeping and, sometimes, supernatural activities, so would not change these averages much. It is also worth noting that any error in my observations is likely to fall on the side of over-estimating activity, as anything that happened in women's houses (probably sleep, rest and sex) or men's houses (probably sleep, rest and social activities) was harder to observe than any activity that happened in kitchens or outdoors.

of kin with processes of production, distribution and consumption precludes the drawing of a clear distinction between work and leisure."

### **The Purpose of Schooling and the Concept of Work: Walak Perspectives**

The lack of a concept of work challenges two of the purposes of schooling assumed in international development that I outlined earlier. The idea that schooling is the antidote to child labour invokes the idea of work outside of school as arduous, burdensome labour that children are coerced into, as they were in factories during the industrial revolution, but none of Walak children's activities could be described this way. In fact, the concept of work is so foreign to Walak children that school may be the first time children encounter the expectation that they "work." Schooling is not replacing child labour among the Walak; if anything, it is introducing the concept. Furthermore, outside of school, Walak children's activities are not categorised as "work" and "non-work." As I showed in Chapter Six, children gradually learn to contribute productively to the needs of their household and their wider networks, and they increasingly learn to manage their autonomy in accordance with their obligations and with Walak values. However, this learning does not occur in discrete, time-bound periods in which their autonomy is sacrificed in anticipation of valued outcomes. Instead, it occurs holistically, with children learning social, spiritual and practical knowledge through play, participation, conversation, instruction and observation (see Chapters Two and Six). Schooling may indeed be teaching Walak children to work, but this is not one of its purposes from the Walak perspective, as Walak people do not share the European and North American concept of or value for work.

Nonetheless, the idea that one of the purposes of schools is to prepare children for future work does appear to resonate with Walak people. For Walak people, as for Papuans more widely, skills learned in school like being able to read, write and speak Indonesian are valued but the primary purpose of schooling is to obtain a school certificate in order to be eligible to apply for civil service positions or run for political office. This seems to invoke the idea that the purpose of schooling is to prepare children for a future occupation. However, salaried occupations are valued by Walak people for the access to political power, material wealth and legitimisation that they represent. Each of these reasons for investing in schooling, which I shall examine in

turn, can be understood as a way of Walak people attempting to reposition themselves within the conditions of inequality they observe, motivated by their value for egalitarianism.

### **Political Power**

The first reason for pursuing civil service occupations and political office is that getting relatives into government positions is understood to be a way of building political power and even of contributing to what is seen by some people to be the growing momentum behind the Papuan independence movement. Munro (2013, 33) argues that Dani people see "education as a way...to resist Indonesian dominance and restore indigenous control of land and social life." This sentiment was implicit in several conversations I had about schooling with Walak people. Schooling provides a way to obtain knowledge (such as fluency in Indonesian, and how the political system works) and connections, which can be used to serve political goals (Munro, 2013). It also facilitates access to salaried positions, which according to one of Munro's (2015, 173) informants, Jally, are a prerequisite of Papuan political independence. Jally's argument that education is important because Papua currently has insufficient human resources for independence is reminiscent of the Dutch investment in education in order to prepare a Papuan elite for self-governance (see Chapter Four).

Schooling also represents a way to gain political power within the existing political system. According to the Special Autonomy law of 2001, the highest level of civil service positions must be held by Papuans (Special Autonomy, 2001, Stasch, 2015). Many Walak people, like many other Papuans, are eager to have relatives elected to one of the ever expanding number of civil offices, which include Regent (*Bupati*), subdistrict head (*Camat* or *Distrik*) and village head (*Kepala Desa*). With these, as with lower level civil service positions, people must have school certificates to be eligible to run for office. Thus, whether through challenging the current political regime or through obtaining positions within it, part of the purpose of schooling is to facilitate access to political power.

## Material Wealth

To most Walak people in Eragayam Tengah, the access to material wealth that political offices and civil service occupations represent is even more important than the political power associated with these positions. Political offices are numerous and well-funded in Papua, as the Special Autonomy law dictates that the majority of the tax revenue from the extraction projects located in Papua Province must remain in the province (Stasch, 2015). However, there is little accountability above or organisation below these officials, and, as Anderson (2013b) puts it, "the creation of new government offices often have nothing to do with the provision of services." Consequently, funds are more frequently distributed to kin or given in the form of "cash and consumables to outlying rural constituents in direct exchange for electoral support" (Stasch, 2015, 64) than they are invested in governmental services. Political offices and civil servant positions alike - and hence schooling - have therefore come to be equated with access to material gains as well to political power (Munro, 2013, Stasch, 2015, 2016). Indeed, accessing material wealth has been cited as a motivation for schooling in some Papuan populations since schools were first introduced (see Chapter Four). The goal here is not greater abundance in the form of increased sweet potato harvest, more land, or even more pigs, but is rather wealth in the form of money and manufactured, foreign goods - the domain of wealth within which Walak people (and other Papuans) find themselves, and are found by others, to be unequal to the non-Papuans they encounter.

## Legitimisation: Overcoming Perceived Primitiveness

Schooling, and the occupations it facilitates access to, are also valued by Walak people because they represent successful entry into an alternative economy which symbolises having overcome perceived primitiveness. Salaried occupations are, like school knowledge itself, markers of being an "educated" person, which is symbolically contrasted with being a "stupid" or "primitive" person, as Genk Yikwa articulates (see Appendix Six). Thus, schooling is a way of becoming a 'somebody,' expressed in Indonesian as "*menjadi manusia*" (literally, "become human," Stasch, 2015, 81). Korowai regularly cite examples of successful individuals from other Papuan groups as

a reason for investing in schooling, sometimes commenting that they feel inferior in comparison, or that people from other groups mock them for their primitiveness because their investments in schooling have not yet resulted in successful outcomes such as obtaining salaried occupations (Stasch, 2015). According to these explanations, schooling is a way of overcoming constructions of Papuan primitiveness. It serves as a means of seeking "social advancement" (Stasch, 2015, 80) and of "overcoming alleged backwardness" (Munro, 2013, 33) for both the individual and their relatives.

## **Conclusion**

A concept of work which Walak people do not share is assumed in understandings of the purpose of schooling which are promoted within international development organisations, including Ob Anggen. Whilst Walak people do value the political offices and salaried occupations that schooling facilitates access to, they are not valued for their own sake, but, as described, for the material wealth, political power and symbolisation of having overcome perceived primitiveness that they represent. According to most Walak people, the purpose of schooling is to prepare children for work in these positions; it is to facilitate access to power, wealth and status through these positions.

Walak people's aspirations for state-funded schooling centre on two specific outcomes: becoming a civil servant or becoming an elected government official. These two governmental positions that schooling facilitates access to relate to schooling's potential outcomes differently. Becoming a civil servant is a respectable, salaried and nationally legitimised position. It is understood to prove the capacities of not just the post holders but also, by association, their kin. It provides a steady salary which employees can distribute in exchange relationships, strengthening their own social standing and that of their relatives. Furthermore, it builds Papuan "human resources" which is seen by some people as a prerequisite for Papuan political independence (see Chapter Eight and Munro, 2015). Becoming an elected official, particularly at the higher levels such as that of Regent, represents far more than that and is also a far less likely outcome of schooling. Elected officials hold well-recognised positions of power with large budgets associated with them. This is true even of the position of Village Head (*Kepala Desa*), which is the lowest level of elected official, whereas those who

become Regent hold a kind of celebrity status. Their wealth - and hence their capacity to "help" (*bantu*, see Appendix Six, page 346) those who have helped them - is flaunted through mansions, helicopters, trucks and extravagant feasts for those who vote for them.

The ambitions that Walak people have for state schooling are amplified when applied to Ob Anggen. Whereas state schooling offers, at best, fluency in Indonesian, Ob Anggen offers fluency in English,<sup>62</sup> and potentially international connections to boot. Whereas state schooling offers access to civil service positions, Ob Anggen children delighted Walak adults with ambitions such as "I want to be a pilot," and "I want to be a doctor" - positions that combine material comfort with status. Whereas state schooling offers a school diploma, Ob Anggen offers the actual skills and knowledge which symbolically counter constructions of primitiveness. Whereas state schooling offers pathways to equality on national scale, Ob Anggen appears to offer them on a global scale. As such, Ob Anggen was a highly attractive option to Walak parents, though not for the reasons that its foreign supporters think. As I shall argue in the next chapter, differences between indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders' understandings of the purpose of schooling have profound implications for the research questions I set out in Chapter One.

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<sup>62</sup> It is no coincidence that the school was more frequently called the "English language school" by children's parents than "Ob Anggen" or any other name.



# Chapter Nine: Conclusion

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In this thesis I chose to approach my research questions about schooling by focusing on how Walak children learn outside of school, and on indigenous Walak people's perspectives on schooling. By decentralising schooling, I hoped to gain insights into why state schooling appears to be failing in the rural highlands of Papua Province, and into how schooling can better be used to benefit local people (Chapter One). I started by outlining the ethnographic context of Eragayam Tengah (Chapter Two). I reflected on my own experiences of using foreign research methods to learn indigenous concepts, and considered how Walak people taught me, responded to me and held me accountable to indigenous ethics and values (Chapter Three). I also learned by being, as one good Walak friend put it, "like a little child" who needed to be educated herself. I then examined the historical and provincial context of schooling in Papua, and presented data on how widely reported problems with state-funded schooling affect schools in Eragayam Tengah (Chapter Four). Private schools like Ob Anggen seek to address these problems by providing alternatives to failing state schools. I analysed the vision and values of Ob Anggen that shape children's experiences in school (Chapter Five) and compared these to the detailed observations I made of children's activities and interactions outside of school (Chapter Six). I also examined the extent to which schooling is incompatible with indigenous education in view of the time children spend in school (Chapter Seven). I found that schooling and indigenous education are not necessarily incompatible, but that they are underpinned by different values and assume different concepts. One of these is the industrial capitalist concept of work, which relates to assumptions about the purpose of schooling (Chapter Eight). As I shall argue in this chapter, the differences I found between indigenous and foreign values provide some explanation for the problems with state schooling. This concluding chapter returns to the research questions I outlined in Chapter One and applies my findings to them.

## **Egalitarianism, Meritocracy and the Purpose of Schooling**

Although liberal capitalist and liberal democratic perspectives on international development differ in their understandings of the purpose of schooling (see Chapter

One), values of hard work, equality of opportunity and meritocracy characterise both. These values are also foundational to Ob Anggen. By contrast, the purposes of schooling for Walak people are informed by their egalitarian values. Walak understandings centre on providing greater access to political power and material wealth and on overcoming perceived primitiveness. These are three areas in which Walak people experience inequality. These different understandings of the purpose of schooling have implications for assumptions about work as a means to success within schooling, and about work as a result of schooling success.

### **Work As A Way to Success**

Within Ob Anggen, as with most schools which seek to further international development, teachers attempt to give children equal opportunities to succeed. The schools are set up to be meritocratic, so that if children work hard and have talent, they should be able to progress successfully, obtaining knowledge, skills and a school diploma. The meritocratic principles of success in Ob Anggen reflect the idea, prominent in international development, that unequal outcomes are acceptable if they occur as a result of a lack of hard work or talent. The following excerpt from a report about inequality among Indonesia's children prepared by a World Bank team and funded by Australian Aid is explicit about the values on which this perspective on the purpose of schooling is founded:

Income inequality is not always a bad thing; it can provide rewards for those who work hard and take risks. Hard work and innovation benefit society by creating new goods and services that everyone can enjoy, as well as contributing to a larger economy. This, in turn, can present the Government with a greater ability to provide public services to all. If this results in a gap between those who work hard, take risks and innovate and those who work less hard, then some income inequality may be justified and even desirable. Indeed, many Indonesians share this view. When asked in a 2014 survey whether inequality is ever acceptable, 74 percent of respondents say that 'inequality is sometimes acceptable' so long as wealth acquisition is fair and meritocratic. However, inequality is unfair when it is due to factors that are beyond the control of individuals. ...Getting a healthy start in life and a quality education are fundamental prerequisites for getting a good job and earning a decent living in adulthood. When economic inequality arises because of inequality of opportunity, when not everyone has a fair start in life, it is unfair. (Wai-Poi, *et al.*, 2015, 9)

The values that this report extols directly counter Walak values. Walak people do not equate "fair" with "meritocratic," as this report does; to them, inequality is not justified and is certainly not desirable. They do not share the notion that schooling translates into future employment and leadership positions through hard work, as the concept of work on which it is formed is foreign to them, as it is to many other Melanesian people (see Chapter Eight). They do accept that school knowledge is necessary for entry into positions of influence. As one Walak man told me, a person who does not know how to read and write cannot be the President. However, as with Korowai people, who say that being in school makes children's "thinking" become "brilliant, clear," for Walak people it is not hard work that leads to school knowledge, but rather being initiated through institutions such as schooling into "new forms of consciousness" (Stasch, 2015, 82-8). Their understanding of the mechanisms by which successful outcomes are obtained reflect their value for equality; thus, even someone who neither "works" nor is talented may still achieve success.

Schooling success is also affected by social relationships according to Walak people. For instance, given the value they put on reciprocity, parents expect their children to pass their examinations and get a school certificate when they have met their obligations to the teachers. These obligations include the parents making annual payments to the teacher (see Chapter Four and Appendix Six). As my neighbour Genk Yikwa explained to me, "Well, if the student doesn't get good results the parents will be angry at the teacher...[They'll say] 'Why? We sacrificed with a pig, a chicken, money, so why didn't the student pass?' They'll be angry with the teacher" (see Appendix Six). Once individuals have got a school certificate of the right level, they may apply to the civil service. It is generally accepted that they will be successful if they have relatives who are able to pass the necessary tests. As Genk Yikwa said to me, "I've taken the test to become a [government] employee three times but I didn't [get accepted]...we don't have any family on the inside [in the civil service] so I wasn't taken on [*angkat*, literally: 'raised']".

### **Work As A Result of Success**

Walak people's expectations of a person who has obtained a position as a result of their schooling also differ from those of Ob Anggen and international

development organisations. In accordance with the industrial capitalist concept of work, international development practitioners usually conceive of employees and officials as accountable rather than autonomous, and as required to produce outcomes through their disciplined efforts in work activities which are clearly delineated from leisure activities, demarcated by task or subject, and regulated by time. This is the type of activity school is designed to prepare children for.

Success in national and international leadership positions requires accordance with the principles of meritocracy and democracy, but these principles clash with Walak egalitarianism. Walak understandings of the purpose of schooling are motivated, as they are for many Papuans, by what Stasch (2015, 82) calls "the utopian vision of an alternative economic regime" in which food and money are "just there," or as one Korowai man put it, are part of a lifestyle of "getting articles nicely." This utopian vision is one in which schooling, Christianity, spirit appeasement, moral living and other highly valued and culturally informed choices will eventually lead to a new era in which the Walak people (or the Korowai people) will gain equality with wealthy foreigners and will live in material comfort. Consequently, and in accordance with indigenous concepts, Walak people do not expect their employed or elected relatives to have to "work." They assume that an employee or elected official retains autonomy over their time and activities and that their commitments are flexible and can be adjusted according to their other obligations. Employees and officials are expected to continue meeting their social and supernatural obligations, which may involve leaving their place of work for extended periods of time, such as, for example, to attend a funeral or participate in a dispute resolution.

Furthermore, Walak egalitarianism suggests that any benefits a person may be able to access through their role should be distributed and enjoyed widely among their kin and in their local area. In accordance with the value of reciprocity, a salaried individual is expected to "remember" (*ingat* in Indonesian) and "help" or "contribute to" (*bantu* in Indonesian, see Appendix Six) those who supported them in their success. This echoes the Korowai expectation that those who care for boys in school will later eat from the "produce of their hands" (Stasch, 2015, 83). Successful individuals are also expected to be attentive to inequality more generally, to feel compassion and pity

for those who do not have access to the same power and wealth that they do, and to distribute benefits accordingly. It is highly likely that those students who complete their schooling will feel a pressure from their relatives to bring to their local area "progress" (*kemajuan*) or "development" (*pengembangan*) in the form of material benefits, relationships with powerful international partners, and prestige (Munro, 2013, Sillitoe, 2000).

In Chapter Six I argued that Walak egalitarianism obliges everyone who can to make a productive contribution towards meeting the needs of their household and the wider community. I further argued that the values of reciprocity and the importance of social relationships oblige people to participate in exchange relationships and to recognise others as kin through the ways they interact with them. Children who attend school are not excluded from these obligations, but they are expected to fulfil them in slightly different ways to children who do not. Schoolchildren are expected to contribute to their household and wider community by being initiated into an alternative political-economic system in which they can access power, wealth and status, and having done so, facilitate access to such power, wealth and status for their relatives. This is because, whether characterised as political power, material wealth or overcoming perceived primitiveness, or whether more simply stated as obtaining employment as a civil servant or being eligible to run for political office, for Walak people the purpose of schooling is to move them from the margins of global society towards the centre, where power and material resources appear to be abundant.

### **Apparent Similarities Between Indigenous and Foreign Perspectives**

Despite the differences in values embedded in Walak indigenous education and Ob Anggen schooling a remarkable similarity between Walak and Ob Anggen articulations of the purpose of schooling emerged at the school's dedication in Eragayam Tengah. The Walak adults who created a sign for the school dedication presented Ob Anggen's purpose as "preparing leaders for the future who fear God" and as "using education to prepare leaders who fear God to face the era of globalisation" (see Chapter Five, page 154). This assertion of the school's purpose was affirmed by the director of Ob Anggen as it closely resonates with the Ob Anggen vision. Here, Walak and foreign concepts appear to converge.

Stasch (2015) analyses a similarly striking correspondence between indigenous and foreign concepts in Korowai encounters with an Indonesian government official, and with tourists. In these cases, apparent similarities between their use of the concept of "primitive" belie underlying differences. Stasch argues that:

...the primitive is a kind of equivocal 'homonym' (Viveiros de Castro, 2004) in an overall structure of working misunderstanding. Different parties to the encounter coordinate with each other intensely through this category, even as their understanding of the category's content and implications are systematically *uncoordinated*. The process of close social involvement between these different actors might flourish not just *despite* but *because* of the mutual misapprehension. (Stasch, 2015, 85, italics in original)

The same argument applies to the apparent similarities between Walak understandings of the purpose of schooling and those promoted by Ob Anggen staff. Although both are aware that there are differences between their knowledge, pedagogies and values (though they are not always aware what those differences are), in parents' meetings and other school events they consistently coordinate with one another in their articulations of what schooling might achieve. Meanwhile, their values, visions of the prosperous future that schooling could lead to, and expectations about how that future will be obtained are fundamentally different.

A similar miscommunication occurs between multinational development agencies and provincial officials too. Schooling within international development is meant to lead to employment which reduces poverty. This coordinates with the Papuan expectation of increased material wealth. It is also touted as promoting indigenous leadership, which coordinates with the Papuan expectation of an increase in political autonomy. Schooling is also inextricably connected within international development to "progress," which coordinates with the Papuan expectation of overcoming perceived primitiveness. Such miscommunication actually facilitates the close working relationships that Ob Anggen staff have with Walak people and likely also facilitates collaboration between larger international development agencies and Papuan partners. As Stasch (2015, 85, emphasis in original) puts it, their close involvement flourishes, "not just *despite*, but *because* of the mutual misapprehension."

## **Incompatible Expectations of Children's Futures**

Walak understandings of the purpose of schooling are not naive; they are strengthened by the correlation between their own and foreign articulations of schooling's purpose and by a number of observations. Firstly, for over a century Papuans have observed missionaries who have a supply of consumer goods which were previously inaccessible to rural-dwelling Papuans. From an egalitarian perspective, it could reasonably be assumed that missionaries promoted schooling because it was one of the means by which they had themselves gained access to such goods and that they were moved to compassion by the observable inequality between Papuans and themselves. Secondly, schooling continues to be promoted in international development as the solution to multiple social ills (see Chapter One). Thirdly, those Papuans who do indeed make it to positions such as that of Regent are able, thanks to funds made available through the Special Autonomy Law, to access and distribute sums of money which make even supposedly wealthy missionaries gasp. Fourthly, those schooled Papuans who do not become Regent but do manage to get a civil service position as a teacher or office worker are paid money for, at the most, sitting in an office all day, and more usually, in the rural areas at least, sitting in an office only very occasionally. All of these points reinforce the idea that schooling will lead to material gains and other benefits without recourse to anything resembling the industrial capitalist concept of work.

However, the fact that school leavers can access some of the positional benefits (Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2010) of schooling without recourse to "work" is one of the reasons that state schooling in Papua is perceived as a failure internationally. This matters considerably for the students who participate in either Ob Anggen or state-funded schooling because it results in clashing expectations of them. These different expectations are largely incompatible, because they are motivated by different values and employ different concepts of time, fairness, equality, work, social obligations and, ultimately, success. Ethics around resource distribution provide a pertinent example: an individual who has access to resources and does not redistribute some of these to her kin behaves immorally according to most Walak people's values. By contrast, if the same individual redistributes any resources beyond

her own salary in order to fulfil her social obligations, she is considered corrupt by most Indonesian, European and North American employers. UNICEF (in UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012, 5) benignly suggests that schooled Papuans should be equipped to "take an active role in social, economic and political decision-making as they transition to adolescence and adulthood," but schooled Walak individuals may feel they have to choose between abandoning their obligations to kin and community or "failing" in the social, economic and political environments which schooling is meant to equip them for.

Other values are also at odds. For example, UNICEF (UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012, 5) expects schooled adults to have smaller families than they otherwise would, but Walak people value many offspring. Ob Anggen hopes that children's beliefs about the supernatural will be transformed through schooling and that fear of the spirits will not feature in their adult decision-making, but for most Walak people, keeping the spirits happy is a non-negotiable precondition of success. Indonesian politicians hope that schooled individuals will contribute to unifying nation-building efforts, but many Walak people hope that schooled individuals will contribute to the independence movement. Schooled individuals also have their own visions of successful outcomes of education. For state-schooled pupils, these visions are likely to be similar to those of their relatives. For Ob Anggen pupils, it is too early to say whether their understandings will more reflect their relatives' perspectives or the values and visions of success which are promoted in school.

Regardless of whether pupils retain their indigenous values or adopt new ones through schooling, the pressures that the differences between them result in can be immense and there are few people who understand the many assumptions such "successful" individuals are required to navigate. They are faced with a seemingly irresolvable dilemma: Walak relatives' expectations of schooled individuals depend on those individuals' successful participation in foreign social, economic and political arenas, but success in those arenas depends on ethical commitments which undermine the possibility of fulfilling relatives' expectations. It seems schooled individuals are left with two unsatisfactory options: either they must defy their relatives' expectations, adopt foreign values, risk supernatural consequences, and



potentially being ostracised from their kin, or they must maintain their indigenous values, "fail" to hold down positions where their actions lead them to be perceived as corrupt, lazy and unreliable, and thus not reap the benefits associated with schooling. The latter option can lead to shame and embarrassment when schooled individuals are unable to achieve what is expected of them and when they encounter the perceptions of primitiveness, incompetence or immorality some foreigners have of them (Munro, 2013), but for people to whom social and supernatural relations are paramount, it may nonetheless be preferable to the former option. However, a third option which is more preferable still has emerged over recent decades and it is an analysis of this third option which, I argue, makes a significant contribution to answering the question of why state schooling appears to be failing in Papua Province.

### **Why Is State School "Failing" in Papua Province?**

As I outlined in Chapter Four, there are a number of different aspects to the apparent failure of state education in Papua Province. Like West Papua Province and Papua New Guinea, it certainly faces complex challenges to introducing universally accessible, free, compulsory schooling to its diverse, rural population. However, as the journalist Bobby Anderson (2013a) points out many of the problems with state schooling seem to be ones that "district officials have the power, and the funding, to change..." and yet, "They do not." Understanding Walak perceptions of the purpose of schooling provides insights into why this is so. As other Papuans share many of the beliefs and values that lead to Walak people viewing schooling as a tool for countering inequality (see Chapter Eight), these insights have wider relevance for the apparent failure of schooling across the highlands of Papua Province.

Many Walak people's vision of schooling success is one in which schooled individuals are able to obtain salaried employment and be elected to political positions without having to compromise their supernatural beliefs, indigenous values or social relationships. This circumnavigates the conflict, described in the previous section, between access to wealth, power and prestige on the one hand and indigenous social and supernatural obligations on the other. To a limited extent, Papuans have managed to create this alternative vision of success. Some Papuans have managed to obtain

positions and to use the benefits associated with these to benefit extended networks of kin and to ensure the fulfilment of supernatural obligations to appease the spirits.

This is only possible because it occurs on multiple levels of government. Thus, for example, in accordance with Walak understandings of the purpose of schooling, some teachers (particularly those who are salaried civil servants, see UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012) view their roles as a vehicle for accessing and distributing wealth, prestige and power, rather than achieving positive outcomes for schoolchildren. This explains why they do not treat teaching children as a priority. The district officials they are accountable to neither attempt to solve the seemingly surmountable problems with schooling in their districts, nor penalise the teachers for their lack of "work." Instead, they perpetuate a system through which greater access to material wealth, political power and prestige is perceived to be possible. Such actions are intended to facilitate a future in which extended networks of kin benefit from a prosperity founded on reciprocal social obligations and supernatural approval, rather than to facilitate a future in which prosperity is the reward of hard work, innovation and merit.

Although only a few Papuan individuals ever get truly wealthy and powerful through this system, it nonetheless has a degree of popular support. This was underlined to me during an Ob Anggen lesson in May 2013. My brother-in-law who worked in the British Houses of Parliament at the time had come to visit Aaron and me in Eragayam Tengah, and Oreb Gombo, who was then the head teacher of Ob Anggen in Eragayam Tengah, asked him to explain to the schoolchildren what politicians are, and are not, allowed to do to secure votes in Britain. Oreb, who is a Walak man himself, views politicians handing out bags of rice or other goods in exchange for votes as a corrupt practice, and he wanted to take the opportunity to teach the children how democracy is supposed to work, using the British example. After a careful explanation of differences between the two systems, Oreb asked the children, "so which system do you think is better?" To Oreb's frustration, the children enthusiastically shouted back, "the one where the politicians give you rice!"

This incident highlights that Walak views on the current political system in Papua, of which state schooling is a part, are not homogenous. Some indigenous people, like Oreb, condemn common practices such as the redistribution of money and

goods which were intended for other purposes. It also shows that many indigenous people support such practices. Indeed, some people's grievance with the current political system in Papua is not that politicians are corrupt *because* they distribute material goods in exchange for support, but that they are corrupt because they do not distribute *enough* of them. To them, redistribution of wealth does not seem unjust; it seems to be a step towards righting the historic injustice of the chasm of inequality Walak and other Papuan people have observed between themselves and foreigners.

This explains one aspect of why teacher absenteeism is justifiable to some Walak and other Papuan people. To them, teachers', school administrators' and politicians' roles exist primarily to overcome marginalisation and inequality, not to improve government services. Although it results in frequent school closure, many parents accept that salaried teachers live in town in order to access as much power, wealth and prestige as possible. Similarly, it is fairly widely accepted that *guru honor* spend enough time at school to make a contribution to local children accessing school diplomas and school knowledge but also spend enough time away from school to fulfil their social and supernatural obligations in other activities, such as construction, gardening and exchange. Walak people generally expect teachers to have autonomy over how they use their time and resources and also expect that teachers will manage their autonomy in accordance with their social and supernatural obligations. Consequently, schools, like other activities, run flexibly and inconsistently.

However, although teachers' flexibility and autonomy is accepted by schoolchildren's relatives, in accordance with a value for equality, Walak people do expect politicians and civil servants to ensure that schools benefit their children. Nonetheless, as Walak people do not have the same concept of work and productivity as most Europeans and North Americans, the productive value of school is not located in the time or work teachers invest in it, but in its potential to provide access to a better future through social and supernatural relationships. Furthermore, as the most important benefits of state schooling for many Papuans are positional, and as those benefits can be achieved by having a school diploma and the right social relationships, parents' focus is on holding teachers' accountable for ensuring their children get school diplomas. School diplomas in rural Papua are seldom a result of hard,

disciplined labour on the part of teachers or students, nor would they be more valued if they were. Students and teachers apply effort to learning in lessons sporadically but it is also widely acknowledged that schoolchildren's results are dependent on their parents' "contribution" (in cash, chickens and pigs, for instance) to their success. Schools can therefore equip children to get jobs as politicians or civil servants, without relying on regular attendance from either students or teachers.

One reason many Papuans do not seem to hold civil servants and politicians accountable for running schools according to the values promoted by international development agencies is that they do not share those values. Another is that school personnel and politicians often are held accountable (to egalitarian values), but this occurs in ways that foreigners do not recognise. Walak people employ a number of strategies for attempting to "to *assert* or *create* other people's responsibility for egalitarian well-being" (Stasch, 2016, emphasis in original). The first of these is reciprocity. For instance, as I have argued, people who support children in their schooling create a responsibility for those children to reciprocate the "help" they were given, just as parents who give pigs to teachers assert that those teachers' have a responsibility to provide their children with diplomas. Within these reciprocal exchange relationships, although gifts are proportionate, they are not necessarily balanced. If they were, there would be no mechanism for the increase of wealth that Walak people expect to occur through schooling. A second strategy is violence. Examples of this in the context of schooling include the Ob Anggen teacher's story of a father getting a hammer with which to attack the teacher who had hit his son and the implied threat indicated by the parent who nailed up the doors and windows of two of the schools when the head teachers did not produce accurate school diplomas (see Chapter Four). These examples demonstrate the gaps that exist between official and local methods of accountability (see Shah, 2015).

A third strategy for asserting others' responsibility for dealing with inequality is for a person who perceives themselves as unequal to highlight their position as peripheral, powerless or poor to powerful and wealthy actors. This is a relational means of reminding others of their responsibility for egalitarian outcomes (Stasch, 2015, 2016). The intention is that those who have more power and wealth will feel

compassion and pity (*kasihan* in Indonesian) and will consequently act to redress the highlighted inequality. It was this sentiment that a *guru honor* cited as his motivation for getting the YPPGI school up and running again, as he felt sorry for the children who did not have access to schooling. Genk Yikwa (see Appendix Six) also referred to this strategy when he explained to me that the Javanese teachers at the local SMP do not require the parents to contribute as much in exchange for their children's school results as the indigenous teachers do. He says, "Their thinking is like this: 'Oh, we've also got a salary, [if we do this] then it will make these community people's lives hard, we can't do that...'" The director of Ob Anggen explicitly attempts to counteract this strategy, which he frequently encounters, and which he believes leads to low self-worth (see Chapter Five). However, although this tactic appears undignified to people who hold a framework of work-driven merit and dignity, Walak people do not perceive it as such. To them, it is, as Stasch (2015, 76) puts it, "a cultural concept of the efficacy of expressions of deprivation in eliciting relational engagement from the powerful."

Walak people also take responsibility for dealing with inequality themselves. For instance, they attempt to reposition themselves in the face of the inequality they perceive by using schooling to equip themselves with the skills, knowledge and qualifications that they hope will result in increased power, wealth and prestige. When Genk Yikwa (see Appendix Six) asserts that "God created all people intelligent, but it's we who make ourselves stupid, isn't it?" and "...if you're diligent you can know your letters," he is referencing this strategy. Another tactic is to simply abandon a situation in which inequality is rampant. For example, if a school's head teacher is unwilling to take responsibility for ensuring egalitarian outcomes, some people may choose not to participate in that school. This strategy is only effective when alternatives are available, and when people's lack of participation prevents inequality growing. If, as is usual, the head teacher is paid his salary regardless of students' participation, and if students depend on him for access to school diplomas, this strategy is ineffective.

Although it is true that responsibility for inequality is located expansively and jointly among Walak people as it is among many other Papuans (Stasch, 2016, referencing Robbins, 1994), it is my understanding that expectations of people in relation to that responsibility are proportionate to their capacity to contribute, in

terms of ability, power, wealth, prestige and other resources. This is important with respect to schooling, because those individuals who are perceived as the most wealthy and powerful - such as the Regent, the Head of the Education Department, Indonesian government personnel and foreigners - have most responsibility for rectifying inequality. They are expected to contribute the most resources towards schooling and to take the most responsibility for ensuring that schooling is effective. However, they are also the people who have least direct involvement with rural schools, who are least easily held accountable by the communities schools serve, and in many cases, who have least sense of obligation to act according to indigenous values.

### **Is Papuan State Schooling Succeeding in Indigenous Terms?**

Given the arguments I have made so far, it would be tempting to argue that although state schooling appears to foreigners to be failing in the Papuan highlands, in indigenous terms, it is not actually failing at all. However, although it is true that indigenous Papuans have different visions of schooling "success" and "failure" to foreign educationalists and missionaries, many indigenous Papuans agree that state schooling is failing, though for different reasons.

There are multiple ways in which state schooling is failing for local people. Most notably, schooling has not yet resulted in the egalitarian vision of success that many Papuans hope and sacrifice for. Although a few Papuans have become extremely wealthy and powerful, they are in the minority; most indigenous Papuans' standard of living has not significantly changed as a result of schooling. A larger number of people are able to become civil servants than previously, but civil servants' power, wealth and prestige is limited. Many people who complete their schooling do not even obtain a salaried position. Others do not complete their schooling, or end up with a diploma in the wrong name. Meanwhile, parents make considerable sacrifices to ensure their children can access schooling, in order to gain benefits which Munro (2013, 28) argues are "a highly improbable outcome of schooling." Access also continues to be a problem: some parents are anxious about the risks that living away from home to attend school exposes their children to. In particular, they fear that teenage girls will engage in promiscuous behaviour, or will be taken advantage of because their fathers, brothers and *ombaye* are not present to protect them. Some parents express anger

and frustration at teachers who take advantage of their position and exploit parents and children.

One of the conversations I had with Genk Yikwa shows one parent's mixed emotions about the school system (see Appendix Six). Genk seems to accept some aspects of the school system as uncontroversial. For instance, when I asked him whether parents get angry at the teachers for taking and keeping pigs in exchange for exam results he seemed puzzled at why parents would be angry when it is they who give the pigs, further explaining to me, "...it's [for] the children, school is important." I pressed him, asking whether the teachers ever reciprocate and he reiterated that, "No, no. [The contributions are] given for the schoolchildren. They're born and grow there, don't they?" At other points in the conversation, though, Genk was disapproving of the teachers and the local indigenous head teacher. He told me in a serious tone that "These SD teachers are wrong" when we discussed teachers changing children's names on school diplomas, and he talked disapprovingly about the head teacher of his daughter's school who requires that parents contribute pigs, chicken and cash in order to get a school diploma. He also commented that this system is "not really comfortable for the community, for the parents" and that, "They don't do it like that in town...but in the village it's hard."

Walak people are generally more concerned about the ways schooling is failing to be egalitarian than they are about the ways it is failing to be meritocratic. It is true, as Munro (2009, 2013, 2015) points out, that the wider political context limits schooling's potential success, whether measured according to egalitarian or meritocratic values. It is also true that indigenous control over schooling is constrained by the influence of foreigners who inhibit schooling's potential success in egalitarian terms. However, the question of why many seemingly un-egalitarian outcomes have become so prevalent remains an important one. It is unsurprising that some people try to take advantage of the current system for their own benefit, but how do extremely wealthy politicians enjoy the popular support that they do when one might expect their relatives or constituents to assert their responsibility for counteracting such overt inequality? Furthermore, although parents sometimes threaten teachers with violence when they do not provide the expected outcomes of schooling, why do many

reluctantly accept a system which increases inequality by enabling teachers and head teachers to get wealthier than their relatives and neighbours?

There are a number of possible answers to these questions. It may be that those few indigenous Papuans who have become wealthy symbolically affirm the possibility of achieving a utopian, egalitarian future with easy access to material goods. I also wonder whether inequality of outcome can be tolerated by Walak people and other highlanders as long as politicians and teachers engage in exchange in such a way that it enables their relatives to access increasing wealth, and as long as their contributions to exchange relationships are proportionate to their wealth. Indeed, as noted in Chapter Eight, temporal flexibility is built into the exchange system, so perhaps Papuans accept temporary inequality as a necessary prerequisite to eventual improved outcomes for everybody. Another possible explanation is that people choose not to use the strategy of violence towards politicians or teachers because they believe that other strategies, such as self-lowering, are more effective. It is also likely that rural-dwelling highlanders invest in schooling despite the sacrifices and risks involved, despite teachers' practices that are exploitative of schoolchildren's relatives, and despite the seeming improbability of successful egalitarian outcomes, because of a lack of viable alternatives for achieving the same outcomes. Highlanders did not initiate the introduction of schooling to Papua (see Chapter Four), and they know that not every person who completes school will become powerful or wealthy, but they also know that all of the people who become powerful and wealthy have school diplomas, and that teachers are the gateway to school diplomas.

These conjectures suggest rich avenues for future research. Munro (2013, 28) argues that "the inflated possibilities of education may be considered a form of violence because these claims set indigenous men and women up to fail amid unacknowledged conditions that make personal, social and political transformation a highly improbable outcome of schooling in highlands Papua." I argue (Shah, 2015) that indigenous men and women are mostly aware before they invest in schooling of the conditions their children study in and of the different forms of success schooling results in given those conditions, yet many of them still pursue formal schooling because of the outcomes they believe come from schooling. As Stasch (2015) rightly



says, whether people's investment in schooling will prove to be entirely frustrated, as it appears to currently be for many of those who have been schooled, or whether it will result in improved outcomes that become apparent in another generation remains to be seen.

## **How Can Schooling Be Used to Benefit Indigenous Papuans Without Harming Them?**

One of the questions that motivated this research is "How (if at all) can schooling be used to benefit indigenous Papuans without harming them?" It is a question that has global resonance, as many indigenous peoples have found that the alternative to being marginalised, as a result of being unschooled, is cultural homogenisation and ethnocide through schools. Over the course of this research, I have learned that there are practical changes that schools can make to better accommodate indigenous education outside of schools, but that in order to really answer this critical question, one must begin by defining "benefits." A common understanding of the purpose of schooling cannot be assumed, as it too frequently is.

### **Shared Purposes and Defining "Benefits"**

In order to use schooling to better "benefit" indigenous people, Papuans and international partners need first to negotiate a shared understanding of the purpose of schooling. This is not easily achieved because, as I have argued above, there can be considerable apparent overlap between foreign and indigenous actors' articulations of the purpose of schooling despite their fundamentally different understandings of it. Indeed, miscommunication is often what facilitates the foreign-indigenous partnerships that exist in the Papuan highlands. Furthermore, the reason Walak people and foreigners focus on different benefits of schooling is that they are motivated by different values, and as values often relate to people's sense of identity and morality, they are difficult to compromise on.

Nonetheless, unless differences in values and understandings of the purposes of schooling are acknowledged and addressed, the problems I have identified in this thesis will continue. As it currently stands, the burden of responsibility for bridging the gap between indigenous and foreign values lies with schoolchildren, and with Papuan

adults who accommodate or adapt to foreign values. In my opinion, as schools are being introduced to rural areas of Papua for the benefit of indigenous residents, and as industrial capitalist values have historically been, and continue to be, more mainstream within international development than indigenous peoples' values, the burden of responsibility for understanding value differences and for bridging the gap should lie more heavily with foreign partners.

There are a number of potential approaches for addressing value differences. Values fall on a spectrum of importance. In some instances, certain values are paramount to some partners and of only minor importance to others. For example, reciprocity is of critical importance to Walak people, and rarely violates important values for foreigners. This is fertile ground for compromise. In other instances, foreigners hold values which are not even compatible with their own core beliefs but which they promote unawares, having learned them through their personal experiences and social relationships. Once examined, these values can be modified. For example, foreigners who live in Papua are sometimes surprised to discover that they value efficiency more than social relationships. When this value does not align with their core beliefs, they are willing to adapt. In some instances, paramount values of foreign and indigenous partners will conflict and a decision about whether to proceed in spite of these differences will have to be made. Walak people's value for autonomy falls into this category as it conflicts with the value of submission to authority promoted in Ob Anggen. Different beliefs about the supernatural also fall into this category. Even in these cases, an understanding of different stakeholders' perspectives about the purpose of schooling and the values on which these perspectives are founded is valuable for interpreting one another's actions and reducing miscommunication.

### **Towards Bi-education: Recommendations for Practice**

The data I presented in Chapter Seven suggest that although schooling does represent a threat to indigenous education, the two forms of education are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Although the most important recommendation that emerged from my research is to acknowledge and address different values and understandings of the purpose of schooling, my findings also suggest several other

recommendations for those practitioners who wish to organising schooling in a way that is less detrimental to children's indigenous education.

The first of these recommendations is not to indigenise schooling. Although the argument for indigenising school curriculums is prominent, particularly in education reforms that seek to be more relevant to indigenous peoples (for example Nyerere, 1967 in Tanzania, Wroge, 1998 in Papua New Guinea), I argue that there is little merit in it. It is founded on the assumption that schooling is a universal good that should be compulsory, and that schools should therefore give children the skills and values needed to live a fulfilling, rural life as well as to enter the cash economy in urban centres. In fact, Walak people and other highlanders have been equipping children to live a fulfilling, rural life for generations; their indigenous education is effective. Indeed, when people who are not indigenous presume to teach indigenous knowledge they are likely to distort representations of indigenous people and their knowledge (Kaomea, 2005). Papuan highlanders intend that schools will teach their children foreign knowledge, not indigenous knowledge, which they are adept at teaching and learning themselves.

Teachers and school administrators who are concerned about schooling's potentially destructive relationship with children's indigenous education would do better to organise schooling to accommodate children's learning outside of school than to indigenise schooling. Geographically and socially embedding a school in the community it aims to serve, as Ob Anggen does, mitigates some of the risks to indigenous knowledge and identity loss that schools normally entail. It allows school staff to be incorporated into the local network of social relationships instead of schoolchildren being removed from it. It also allows schoolchildren to participate in daily activities outside of school which, as I showed in Chapter Six, constitute an important part of their learning. Schools which are local to children's homes are more accountable to their pupils' relatives as a result of their greater visibility. They are also able to partner with children's relatives to incorporate traditional practices into school events, which can be one way of communicating value for indigenous culture within a school environment. This particular form of indigenising schooling (in which children's

relatives organise indigenous events and activities within a school context) is quite different to the above, and can be beneficial.

School personnel can further accommodate children's indigenous education by encouraging children not to start school till they are at least six or seven years old, in order to give them a chance to build a strong foundation in indigenous skills, values and knowledge (see Chapter Six). It would be beneficial to allow students a greater number of flexible days in the school year to participate in important events such as weddings, funerals and dispute resolutions, and to accompany their parents on longer trips which the school day otherwise precludes them from participating in (see Chapter Seven). These flexible days would be well justified on the basis that such events and trips form an important part of children's education and establish social connections (see Chapter Six). It is also important for school to finish sufficiently early to allow children to have free daylight time outside of school hours, and to avoid using homework as a regular learning activity. This is partly because the time children spend participating in and observing activities outside of school is an important part of their learning, but it is also because children need time away from the time- and task-oriented school environment to be autonomous and to learn to manage that autonomy in accordance with their indigenous obligations.

Such adjustments to European and North American-derived models of schooling will likely result in children taking longer to finish school. This is not necessarily a problem (Thomas, 2013, 118). School ages are arbitrary and vary from nation to nation; in Ob Anggen classes already accommodate children who are much older than would be typical in urban areas. A less time-pressured model of schooling may seem radical, but the evidence thus far suggests that its benefits could far outweigh the costs. Indeed, adjustments to schooling in accordance with indigenous values that do not directly clash with school values, such as being less time- and task-oriented and allowing children more autonomy and flexibility in school, may prove beneficial to their learning both in and out of school in the long-run.

## **Possible Agendas For Future Research**

My findings so far suggest interesting avenues for future research, in addition to enquiries recommended above into why some Papuans' seemingly un-egalitarian practices are accepted by their relatives and constituents. For instance, I compared a foreign-run school with children's education outside of school, and then applied the insights I gained to state schooling's problems. It would be valuable to carry out further research that considers the issues my research has raised in the context of state schooling itself. Another particularly relevant and important question is "How are 'successful' Papuan individuals negotiating the conflicting pressures and expectations that they face as a result of their success?" There are numerous approaches to the dilemmas that schooling success creates in the Papuan highlands, and although I have outlined how the current schooling and political system contributes to resolving them, the diverse approaches individuals take to resolving the tensions between indigenous, egalitarian values and foreign, meritocratic ones warrant further research. Important insights into the problem of how schooling can be used to benefit Papuans without harming them would be gained from those individuals who have actually lived with the pressures created by incompatible expectations.

## **Conclusion**

I began this research on the premise that understanding how children learn outside of school and learning what indigenous people's perspectives on schooling are would shed light on the question of how to improve schooling in the rural Papuan highlands. My research questions (see Chapter One) were motivated by larger questions. I wanted to better understand the causes of state schooling's apparent failure in the Papuan highlands, and ultimately to contribute to the question of how schooling can best be used to benefit indigenous Papuans.

By focusing on what Walak children learn outside of school and how they learn it, and by comparing this indigenous education to the education children are offered through Ob Anggen school, I learned that the difference in values between these two forms of education is particularly relevant to the question of how schooling can be used to benefit indigenous Papuans. Indeed, differences in values inform the

numerous other differences in content and pedagogy between schooling and indigenous education. A common concern in the literature on indigenous education is that as these differences relate to different imagined futures for children, schooling endangers indigenous peoples' identities, knowledge, languages and livelihoods (see Chapter One and authors such as Aikman, 1999, Bishop, 2003, Dei, 2015, May, 1999b, Semali, 1996). Heider (1979, 66) described Indonesian state schools in the 1970s as being in competition with Dani culture, saying "I suspect that the schools will win out sooner or later...every day that a Dani child spends in school is a day away from Dani life. The years of youth, which once a Dani spent learning to be Dani, are now spent in school, learning to be Indonesian." Levin (2005, 473) described Tahitian children enrolled in school as experiencing "simultaneously competing socialization systems, which each aim to produce two quite different sorts of person." These concerns are valid, and are at the heart of the question of how schooling can be used to benefit Papuans without harming them.

I found that, as Walak people assert, Ob Anggen schooling is not necessarily mutually incompatible with Walak indigenous education (Chapter Seven). Nonetheless, differences in values between schooling and indigenous education matter because Walak people do not just apply their values to children's learning outside of school; they also apply them to children's learning in school. This not only results in competing values being promoted to schoolchildren; but also in different understandings of the purpose of schooling, different visions of the prosperous future that schooling should lead to, and different expectations about how that future will be obtained. Whereas international development organisations view schooling as a meritocratic institution that enables equal opportunities, Walak people view schooling as an egalitarian institution which will facilitate greater access to political power and material wealth, which will enable them to overcome alleged primitiveness, which will move them from marginalised to central positions globally, and which will ultimately promote a utopian, egalitarian future with regard to relations with foreigners.

These differences are frequently invisible in Walak interactions with foreign stakeholders in Papuan education; indeed many Papuan and non-Papuan articulations about the purpose of school are strikingly similar, even though they reference very

different visions of success, such similarities belying underlying differences. As a consequence indigenous Papuans who complete their schooling and succeed in obtaining salaried employment or political office face the unenviable dilemma of whether to adapt to the values promoted by gatekeepers to national and international positions of influence and risk failing to meet their relatives' expectations, or whether to fulfil indigenous obligations and "fail" in foreign social, economic and political arenas.

Understanding Walak perceptions of the purpose of schooling provides insight into the critical question of why state schooling appears to be failing so dramatically in the rural Papuan highlands. Reports (such as ACDP, 2014, Anderson, 2013a, Kantor Staf Presiden [The President's Office Staff], 2015, UNCEN, *et al.*, 2012) point out that teachers are frequently absent from their positions because their supervisors are themselves absent, because they are paid regardless of whether they attend, or because those who appointed them never expected them to work regular hours, but they do not explain *why* seemingly basic expectations of teachers and schooling are absent in rural parts of Papua. One of the explanations suggested by my research is that the way the state schooling system currently operates allows individuals to circumnavigate the conflicts between foreign and indigenous obligations which arise in salaried occupations. It also enables access to the positional benefits of schooling without recourse to the foreign concept of work and by means that align with indigenous values and expectations about positive outcomes. Moreover, it furthers the idea that schooling facilitates access to material wealth and political power. This is not to say that indigenous Papuans themselves view state schooling in the rural highlands as successful, but their assessment of its failure is largely on egalitarian rather than meritocratic terms. Some Papuans also believe that as the purpose of schooling is to promote equality, responsibility for state schooling's failures lies primarily with those people who are currently benefiting most from inequality.

The question of how schooling can be used to benefit indigenous Papuans without harming them is not an easy one to answer, not least because most indigenous Papuans define the benefits of schooling differently to how international agencies define them. Walak people, like many other Papuans, tend to focus on the

positional benefits of schooling, which they understand in their own terms, whereas international development tends to promote the instrumental and intrinsic benefits of schooling. Recognising this difference is useful in itself as it highlights the gap that exists between unspoken indigenous and foreign assumptions about schooling, warns of the pressures that schoolchildren and schooled adults might face in trying to bridge that gap, and underlines the need for foreigners involved in schooling in Papua to prioritise building shared visions of schooling success with their indigenous partners.

To my knowledge, the work I have presented here is the first substantial piece of ethnographic research about Walak people. Through it, I have learned how important it is to pay attention to values in relation to education. Attention to how schooling differs from indigenous education in terms of content and pedagogy is insufficient, and results to misleading recommendations, unless it also takes into account the values that motivate these differences. Values, though often unarticulated and unexamined, drive more visible actions and interactions and shape people's interpretations of others' actions and interactions. Consequently, a better understanding of our own and one another's values facilitates stronger relationships and collaborations.



# Appendix One: Residence and Kinship in Gabedloma

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In Chapter Two, I use Gabedloma as an example of how Walak kinship and residence interact. Here I give further details of how the eighty-four people I recorded as living in Gabedloma on my census were related to one another. My census, and the associated genealogical diagrams I present in this appendix, are necessarily partial. Children who had died were not always included and in places I have omitted the names of the children of people who had moved away. Furthermore, diagrams are static but Walak residency, especially among men, is highly flexible. There were a number of men who regularly moved between Gabedloma and other places, some of whom are included and some of whom are not. At best, the census and diagrams reflect a brief moment in time.

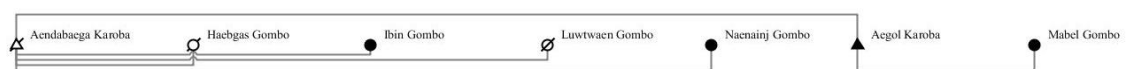
The genealogical diagrams show the descendants of Aendabaega Karoba and Aegol Karoba. Those people marked by filled symbols were recorded as living in Gabedloma on my census. As they show, strict virilocal residence patterns are not followed. Several of the households in Gabedloma are those of the brothers Aendabaega Karoba and Aegol Karoba, their sons and their sons' sons, but both Aendabaega and Aegol have a daughter living in Gabedloma with their families too (these daughters are identified by the initials EK and UK on the genealogical diagrams). One of Aendabaega's sons (YK) died, and his wife (HG) has also stayed in Gabedloma with her children and, now, her new husband (DT). Aegol's wife's sister's son (NG) resides in Gabedloma with his wife and children too, because he was adopted by Aegol as a baby. Two of Aendabaega's descendants (YG and HK) also include their wives' sisters' sons in their households. Aendabaega's daughter's son (EG) also lives in Gabedloma with his family, because they moved there to escape a woman who was maliciously targeting their daughter through spiritual means in their previous residence.

Twenty-four of the Gabedloma residents (from eight households) are not directly related to Aendabaega, Aegol or their descendants and, consequently, are not

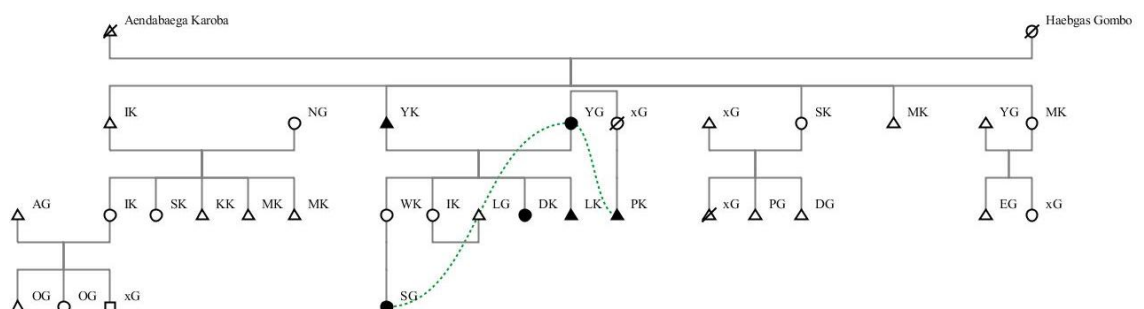
shown on these genealogical diagrams. For example, one man who comes and goes from Gabedloma is Boliyp Gombo, the father to Aendabaega's son's wife (TG) and to Aegol's daughter's husband (YG). Boliyp's wife lives in Gabedloma permanently. Another man, Pet Gombo, is more closely related to men living in Iringgok and Modloma - two neighbouring *lokasi* (see Chapters Two and Three) - but as he is a senior church leader, he, his wife and his descendents sleep in the church compound in Gabedloma. As I point out in Chapter Two, only thirty-one of the eighty-four people living in Gabeldoma belong to the nuclear families of Aendabaega, Aegol and their male descendents and thus live in Gabedloma in accordance with the stated virilocal residence preference.

Those people marked on the genealogies by a filled blue symbol feature elsewhere in this thesis. As such, the initials for their names are the initials of the pseudonyms used to represent them in the thesis. The full names of Aendabaega, Aegol and their wives are also pseudonyms. I have used the initial 'x' for an unknown first name and 'X' for an unknown *aluak* name. A dashed black line marks a marriage that has ended due to death and prior to remarriage. A dashed green line marks adoption. No divorces are shown on these diagrams. Twins are not distinguished from other siblings.

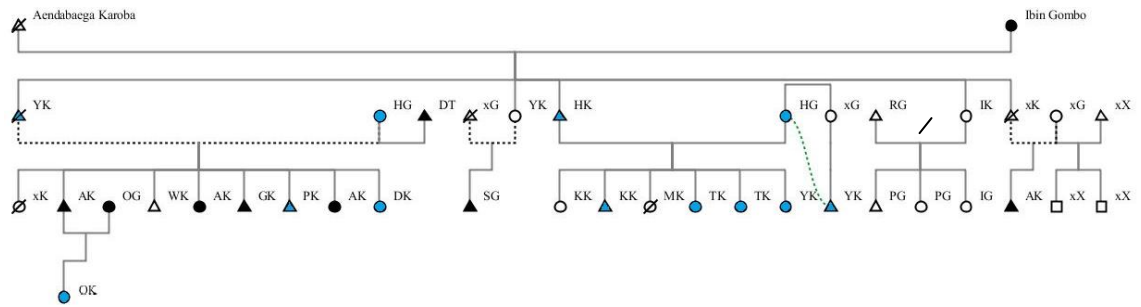
## Genealogical Diagrams for Aendabaega Karoba and Aegol Karoba



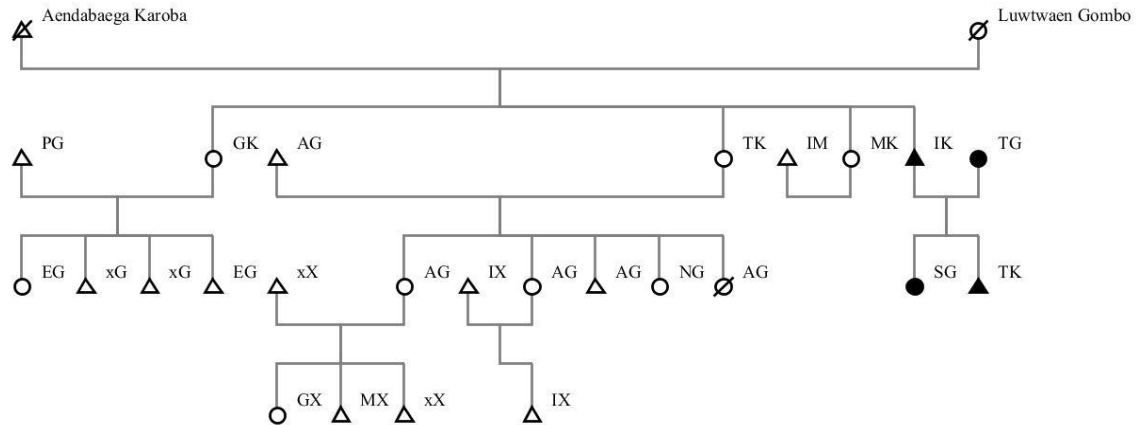
**Two Brothers - Aendabaega and Aegol - and Their Wives**



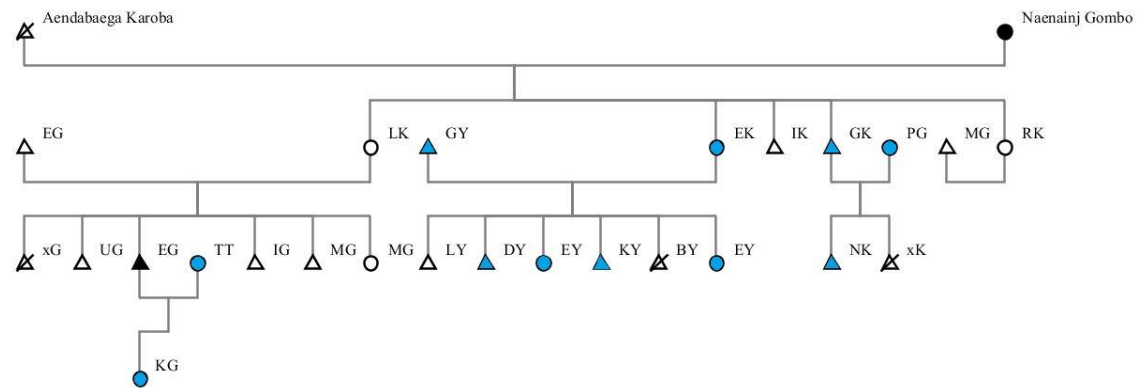
**Aendabaega's Descendants By His First Wife**



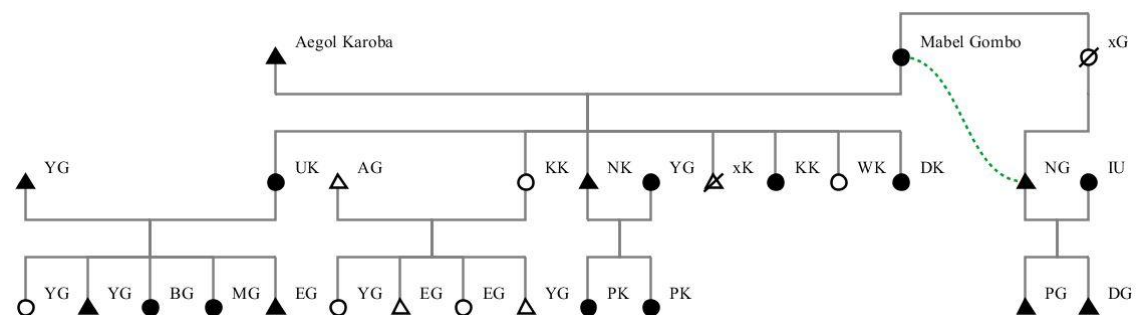
***Aendabaega's Descendants By His Second Wife***



***Aendabaega's Descendants By His Third Wife***



***Aendabaega's Descendants By His Fourth Wife***



***Aegol's Descendants***

## Appendix Two: Gender Relations

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Gender constitutes an important dimension of social organisation for Walak people, as it does for many New Guinea highlanders (see Chapter Two). Differences between men and women's activities in the New Guinea highlands have been variously articulated as women contributing predominately to the "domestic domain" while men dominate the "public" or "political" domain (Butt, 2001, 59-60, Josephides, 1983, 291) and as women being primarily "producers" while men are primarily "transactors" (Sillitoe, 1985, 508, Strathern, 1972, 132-156).<sup>63</sup> As I show in Chapter Two, Walak men and women also contribute unequally to different activities.

Some ethnographers have explained the seeming inequality between men and women in the highlands by qualifying the claim that New Guinea highland people are egalitarian, arguing that the separation of men and women and the gender division of labour, both so common across the highlands, are particular expressions of a general subordination of women (Butt, 2001, Godelier, 1982, Josephides, 1983, Modjeska, 1982). In some of these accounts, men are portrayed as independent relative to women, and thereby powerful and able to dominate women who depend on them (for example Modjeska, 1982, 62). In others, the sketch is one of men who exploit women's productive labour on which they depend in order to advance their own transactional aims, such as pursuit of prestige and leadership from which women are excluded (for example Josephides, 1983).

However, even those ethnographers who depict male domination do record examples of women's agency, influence, status, position, and power. Butt (2001, 60), for example, points out that women "subvert male authority" through "strong-willed independent actions" and Josephides (1983, 298) acknowledges that women can influence the public domain through their husbands, are full participants in "the politics of everyday life" and can gain credit or prestige for themselves, although she argues that they cannot turn this to political advantage. Furthermore, though men may claim that women comply with their decisions, "they actually have limited control over

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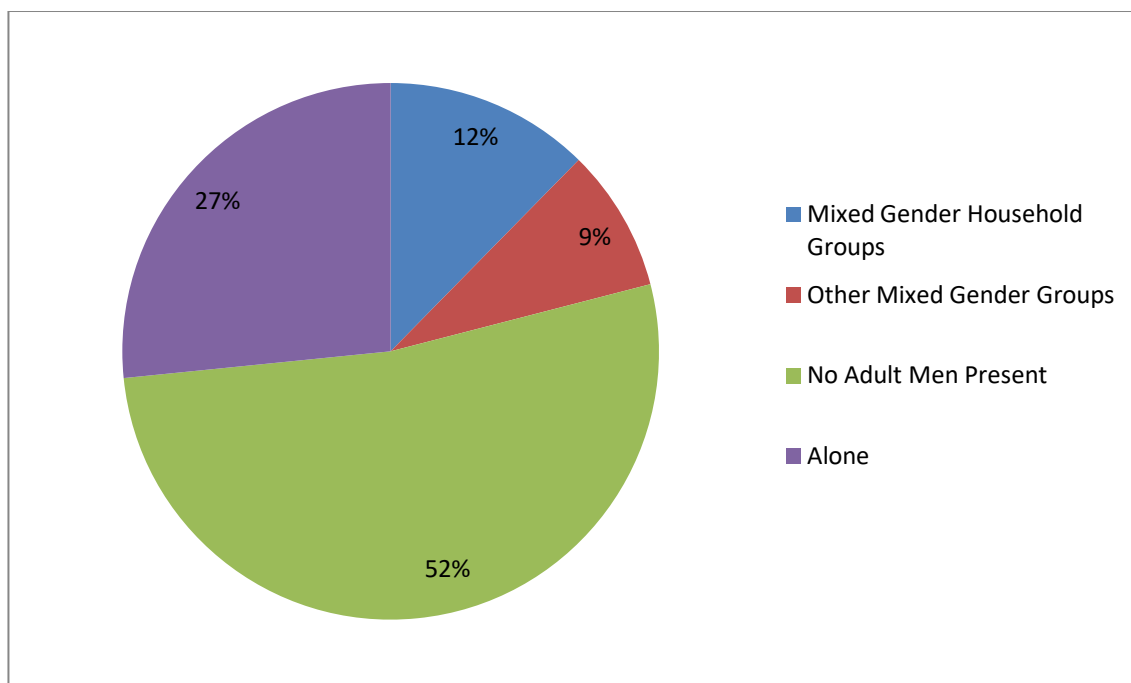
<sup>63</sup> Both Sillitoe and Strathern revise this characterisation of different "domains" of contribution according to gender in later works (see Sillitoe, 2010 and Strathern, 1988).

women's behaviour" (Sillitoe, 1985, 517). Both Butt (2001) and Josephides (1983, 299) record examples of such limited control in the context of marriage; in Josephides' example the brothers of a bride-to-be had hoped she would marry someone else but eventually gave up saying "the woman is too strong."

In Chapter Two, I argue that Walak gender relations are best understood as egalitarian, despite the differences between men and women's activities. In this appendix I provide further evidence for the claims I make in Chapter Two about the ways that Walak gender relations feature autonomy and equality, rather than domination and exploitation.

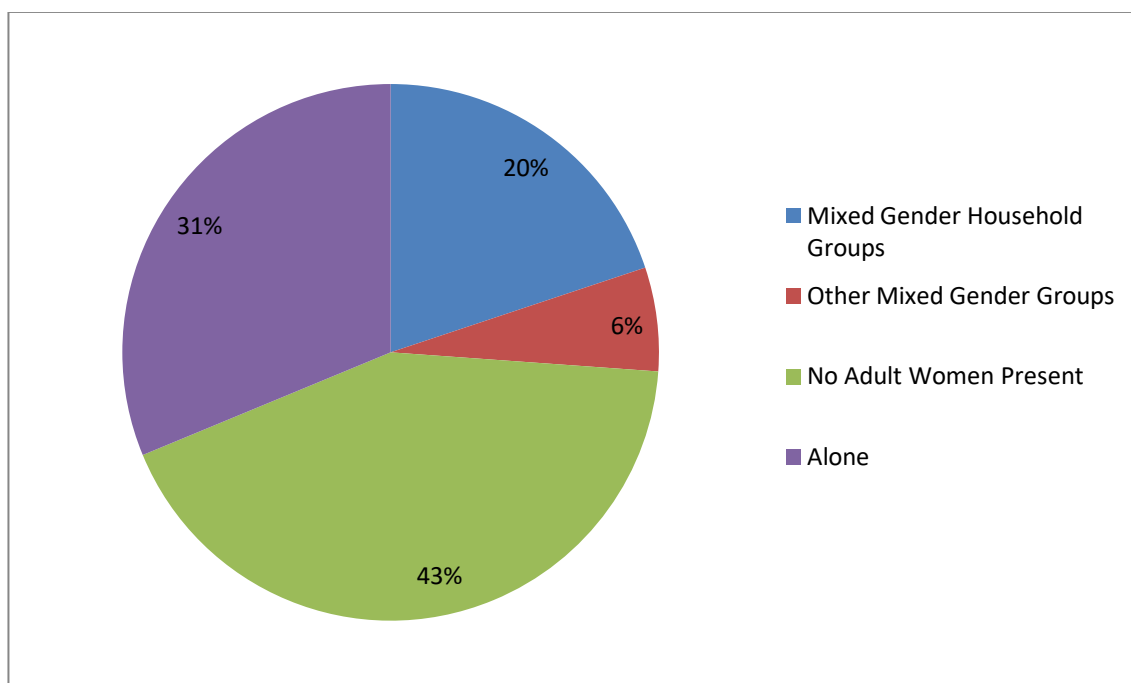
### **Separation of the Genders**

Ethnographers in some other areas of the highlands report strong beliefs about pollution that keep men and women separated (Meggitt, 1964), but although the ideal residence pattern for Walak men and women is separate houses, it was not unusual or shameful for men to sleep in their wives' houses. Women also gave birth to children in their homesteads, rather than going to a segregated area to prevent pollution. Similarly, although men and women sit on different sides of church, sit in separated groups at gatherings and tend to do their activities separately, there is a lot of friendly interaction between the two gendered groups. Activities which are done by both men and women, such as collecting grass to thatch a roof, may be done together or separately depending on the occasion. Labour for community projects, such as building a road for the school vehicles or clearing the land for the school building, is done by large mixed gender groups, but on breaks men and women separate to cook (women), smoke (men), and eat, drink and talk (both genders) in single gender groups, though even on breaks this separation was not strictly followed. During my first few days in Eragayam, I observed a man on a break from road-building wander over to our women's area, help himself to some of our pile of food, and chat in a friendly way to one of the women. I later realised that such interaction was typical.



**Graph A.1 Observations of Women By Gender Mix**

Based on spot observation data, n = 267



**Graph A.2 Observations of Men By Gender Mix**

Based on spot observation data, n = 176

Charts A.1 and A.2 show this separation and flexibility in action through a breakdown of the gender mix of groups observed during the time allocation study for

adult women and men. 12% of observations of women were of mixed gender groups of adults from their household, including, for example, their husband, adult son, father, son-in-law or father-in-law and a further 9% of observations were of women in wider mixed gender groups. 20% of observations of men were of mixed gender household groups and a further 6% were of men in wider mixed gender groups. These wider mixed gender groups occurred in work parties, in the cooking house where the household gathers to eat on a daily basis and welcomes adult guests of either gender, in the cooking house at funerals where guests of both genders cooks and talks around the fire, and in mixed gender groups travelling together, to go to market for instance. Spouses also sometimes travelled together or undertook tasks such as looking after pigs or children jointly. I observed five spouse pairs on their own, seven spouse pairs with children and two spouse pairs with adult household members present during the spot observation.

## **Women's Influence**

It is true that Walak men hold most positions of influence. The people referred to as the *kepala suku* and those who hold positions of influence such as supervising the distribution of meat at feasts are all men. All church leadership positions and Indonesian local government political offices are also held by men. Women can be government employees as teachers, nurses, midwives or office workers, but only two of the various Ikonium women employed as civil servants lived locally. Women are also involved in political campaigns. For example, I heard a woman give a speech from the stage during one local rally for a political party. I did not know of any women who were elected officials, though.

It is also true that Walak men sometimes talk about their roles in a way that indicates that they control the goings-on of both men and women in the community. For example, Gogoda Karoba explained to me how men have meetings and make decisions in the men's house. Whenever something of importance needs to be decided, the men will gather in their *lokasi*'s men's house where they will discuss the matter and make decisions. Then, he continued, they will tell the women and children what to do - "prepare vegetables," for instance. As I know Gogoda well, I challenged his description, citing the public and often heated discussions I had regularly witnessed

and even participated in after church when women were present. He told me that it was fine to make a decision in the men's house and then later do an announcement about it in church. After all, different *lokasi* might each have meetings in their own men's houses. Much the same explanation of decision-making was given me by a group of men who I interrupted in the middle of just such a meeting.

Certainly the men's house is the ideal and probably the most frequent location of decision-making meetings, but women are not as out of the loop as these accounts imply. Even men's house meetings are often within earshot of women in the compound, and many other decision-making meetings are held with women present, both informally in the cooking house, and more formally in the heated discussions that follow the close of church services. Women also have influence over men's decisions. In post-church meetings, women could and did make announcements or add their comments to a discussion. Though women spoke up far more rarely than the most vocal men did, when they did speak they were listened to. Women are also able to influence decisions in less visible ways, such as through their husbands (Sillitoe, 1985), through supernatural means, and through their talk amongst themselves. Gossip among women is a formidable force; both men and women fear being talked about negatively as such talk influences public opinion. I suspect it is sometimes what triggers men's house decision-making gatherings in the first place.

Regardless of these opportunities for women to exert influence, Walak men are more influential than women in public settings. However, I did not hear women express a desire to be more politically influential (nor did Strathern, 1972), a hankering to know more of what went on in men's supposedly undisclosed discussions or even resistance to the tasks men were telling them to do as a consequence of the decisions they made that affect everyone. I think neither men nor women believe that women do not have access to knowledge about what goes on and all are aware that women can influence events. Crucially, because of the gender division of activities, men are dependent on women to achieve the influence they wish to have and to implement decisions they make. As such, they are unable to dominate women even if they should wish to do so. My interpretation is that men's public role, debates and decision-making gatherings are seen by both men and women as part of their overall division of



activities along gender lines. When men commented on this gender division of activities, even when it was to highlight that men are the decision-makers, they did not usually do so with disdain for women. The most common attitude was simply that each gender had its own responsibilities and that men are not much informed about or interested in women's responsibilities, though strong, industrious women are respected and praised. Women, likewise, displayed little interest in men's affairs unless they affected them, at which point they were adept at making their opinions known.

### **Women's Autonomy**

The value Walak people put on autonomy applies equally to men and women, as well as to children of both genders (see Chapter Six). As shown in Chapter Eight, the factors that support this autonomy are present in both male and female activities, and neither gender attempts to or is able to control the other's behaviour. The expectation is that women, like men, will act independently, though mindfully of their relationships and obligations. Walak people try to reach an agreement in decisions that affect multiple people through the discussions already described, which are influenced in different ways by both men and women, but as with the nearby Wanggulam (Ploeg, 1969, 70), "if a man cannot agree he is likely to withdraw from the venture, or to perform his part of the undertaking according to his own wishes."<sup>64</sup> Walak women are afforded the same dignity. They influence decision making to the best of their ability, but they too withdraw from ventures which they do not agree with. As in other parts of the highlands, one arena in which Walak women enact their autonomy in this way is marriage (Butt, 2001, Josephides, 1983). Women can refuse to marry someone and can also leave a marriage if they are discontent, returning to their natal home and raising any children they may have there. Unlike Strathern (1972), I never heard of any women being turned away from their homes by their fathers in such circumstances.

In one example, a couple - Ibnay Gombo and Aegnonk Karoba - had been together when they were teenagers, but she had followed another man to the town of Timika and married him. They had not had any children and while I was on fieldwork

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<sup>64</sup> This is also the case with the Korowai (Stasch, 2015) and the Wola (Sillitoe, 2010a).

Aegnonk returned to Eragayam Tengah without her husband and became pregnant by Ibnay, who already had two wives. The snubbed husband from Timika then came to Eragayam Tengah and demanded a settlement. The situation was further complicated by the death of Aegnonk and Ibnay's newborn baby daughter. ("Was this their punishment?" some wondered). An dispute settlement event was held and it was agreed that the bridewealth paid for Aegnonk's first marriage would have to be returned. Ibnay had apparently also been told to pay ten pigs and three million rupiahs (approximately £200), Aegnonk had been told to pay twelve pigs, and Aegnonk's younger sibling (whose involvement I was unable to accurately deduce) had been told to pay fifteen million rupiah (approximately £1000) a year for three years. Relatives then began to contribute resources - net bags, pigs, chickens and money - to allow Aegnonk and Ibnay to make these payments. Meanwhile, Aegnonk became Ibnay's third wife. As this example shows, costly though it may be, women can and do act independently. Comments on Aegnonk's behaviour by other women included "since she does not want to be with [her husband] anymore, she will have to pay him for her bridewealth," "[we will contribute because] they would do the same for us, if we had a problem" and a critique: "they were together when they were young - she could have been with him, but she went to Timika to get married." Each of these comments concedes Aegnonk's autonomy even when the speaker is critical of how she used it.

Four other examples show women acting autonomously in different contexts. In the first, Hem Gombo had been sleeping in the same women's house as Kabuw Karoba. However, when Kabuw's husband announced that he was going to run for public office Hem decided that she did not want to vote for him. She therefore took all her things and moved to sleep in her cooking house. In the second example, two women discovered they were not on the list to vote during one of the local elections. The rule, I was told, is that if you are married and still live in the area you are allowed to vote. Apparently these two women had not been married in church and were not on the list, but to all intents and purposes they were married and they demanded their right to vote. There was a brief argument, until it was decided that they were right and they could indeed vote. In the third example, a woman had suffered the ill effects of widespread gossip about her being one of the women who use their eyes to magically

kill or injure others. One Sunday during church she marched up to the front, slammed an envelope of money on the altar table and announced that the rumours were not true. The fourth example is from a funeral. Usually either mixed gender groups or men approach the hosts to cry, participate in the dirge and make their contributions. On this occasion, though, a woman entered the funeral compound on her own and began walking towards the group of host men wailing. For a moment the men looked at each other, hesitant, and then they stood and received her as they would any other guest, wailing with her and singing the dirges even though she was alone and her behaviour was unusual for a woman. This first two examples are of fairly normal behaviour the second is of somewhat unusual behaviour and the fourth example is of a woman behaving eccentrically. In each case, no one tried to stop the women acting independently and publically according to their own interests.

## **Gender Relations and Violence**

Violence between spouses in marriage was fairly common. Physical fights had occurred between all the married couples that I knew well enough to know such details of their relationships. My impression was that women were more frequently physically hit by their husbands than the other way round, and I heard stories of at least two women who had committed suicide by burning down their sleeping house with themselves (and in one case, her children) inside. Relatives cited violent husbands as the cause of these suicides, and one of these husbands had run away from the area after the incident and never returned, even after reparation payments had been made. His son, who had escaped from the burning building, was brought up by his maternal grandparents. This indicates that some women do suffer domination in their marriages in a way that men do not. Such behaviour is not culturally condoned and must be compensated, but it does seem to occur more frequently towards women. Nonetheless, a husband who is overly violent runs the risk of his wife abandoning him and returning to her natal home, as one of my friends did soon after marrying. In such situations, the man who is being violent is deemed to be wrong and the woman's relatives demand compensation from him for his unacceptable behaviour.

# Appendix Three: Activity Codes for Time Allocation Study

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*Artefact* includes netting bags (women), sharpening a machete (men), fixing a piece of technology

*Chicken Care* includes feeding chickens, chasing chickens and searching for a lost chicken

*Childcare* includes breastfeeding, holding a child, watching a child, bathing a child, placating a child, carrying a child.

*Church Activities* includes travel to and from church, and a church leader looking at dates on a calendar in relation to church affairs

*Construction* includes collecting, preparing and transporting materials to build/repair house or fence, building or repairing house or pig sty, erecting or repairing fencing, clearing/weeding houseyard, laying rocks down to make a walkway and a clothes drying area in yard, hanging washing line in kitchen

*Cooking* includes cooking and food preparation, boiling water, making tea or coffee, guarding a fire, tending a fire, transporting embers from one place to another to light a fire

*Dispute* includes participating in a dispute and sulking/crying as a result of a dispute

*Eating* includes eating or drinking alone, eating or drinking with one's household, eating or drinking socially, babies breastfeeding

*Exchange* includes events other than funerals at which exchange happens, travel to and from such events

*Fetching* includes fetching water

*Firewood* includes collecting, carrying and chopping firewood

*Funerals* includes attending funerals, travel to and from funerals

*Gardening and Harvesting* includes opening a new garden, planting, weeding, harvesting sweet potatoes and greens, washing sweet potatoes, travelling to and from garden

*Household Chores* includes cleaning and ordering clothes and bedding, cleaning and ordering dishes, travel to and from collection of dry grass for house floors, cleaning and ordering cooking house interior

*Illness* includes time spent at home unwell, and time spent eating and drinking within the household unit while unwell

*Personal Hygiene* includes brushing teeth, urinating, washing and changing clothes

*Pig Husbandry* includes supervising pigs, moving pigs, taking pigs in or out of the sty, feeding pigs, cooking for pigs

*Play* includes playing games (including local games, ball games, tag), playing in the physical environment, singing, playing with homemade toys, writing, drawing, travel to and from play

*Resting and Sleeping* includes being idle, staring into space, watching others or waiting silently for someone, doing something relatively mindless and mildly amusing, such as sitting in the kitchen by the fire or fiddling with a phone, sleeping

*School Activities* includes lessons, school break times, homework, teaching, labour for school (by staff), travel to and from school

*Social Activities* includes eating, drinking and talking socially, visiting and being visited, greeting others, travelling to and from visiting

*Trade* includes doing business, travel to and from the market, travel to and from Wamena and other areas beyond Eragayam Tengah.

*Travel* includes travel that is not otherwise accounted for in other activities

## **Categories of Activities**

(see Chapter Two)

*Material subsistence activities* includes making and maintaining artefacts, chicken care, construction, cooking, fetching, firewood, gardening, harvesting, household chores, pig husbandry and trade

*Social activities* includes eating, funerals, school activities and other social activities

*Resting* includes resting and sleeping

# Appendix Four: Time Allocation Study Research Design

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Time allocation research in anthropology is done using a wide range of methodologies, including both self-reporting methods and direct-observation methods, to answer a variety of anthropological questions (Gross, 1984). Those who use direct-observation, as I did, may choose to use any number of research designs to sample their observations, some of which are outlined by Bernard (2011), Suda (1994) and Gross (1984). Given this variation, as well as the fact that any method must be adapted to the demands of the field and the research question, and the argument that one of the strengths of a time allocation study is that it is replicable (Gross, 1984), it seems important to me to outline in some detail how I came to do a time allocation (TA) study, how exactly I designed it, and some of the factors that should be taken into account when interpreting my results.

## **Planning the Study**

I had not planned to do a TA study before I went into the field. However, I fell sick in the field in January 2013 and for nearly three weeks was not strong enough to do anything except rest at home. My Walak friends rarely visited me to talk during that time and I did not have many books with me, so I spent a lot of time lying in bed rereading the sections of Bernard's (2011) *Research Methods in Anthropology* that I had on my Kindle device. I had spent three and a half months in Eragayam Tengah by that point, so I had a better idea of what would and would not work methodologically in that context. Bernard reminded me of the systematic tools I had at my disposal to supplement participant observation. By the time I was well again, I had re-examined and re-articulated my research questions and had reflected extensively on which methods could best supplement participant observation in helping me answer them. I had also decided that one of the methods I would use would be a randomised spot-check TA study which would enable me to investigate whether or not there were any differences between how Ob Anggen and non-Ob Anggen children spend their time.

I actually undertook the study about a year later, toward the end of my fieldwork. This enabled me to base my research design choices on the data I had already collected by that point. It also enabled me to have strong enough relationships to be able to recover from the ethical difficulties of using a method that people did not understand well (see Chapter Three), helped me to code more accurately than I would have been able to do at the beginning of my fieldwork, and made it easier for me to turn up unannounced without my presence unduly affecting people's behaviour. The disadvantage of planning this study in the field is that I did not have access to further literature on the method, nor to technology which might have helped me set up more efficient ways to record my observations. I am grateful to Bernard whose detailed and practical text helped me set up a well-designed study despite these limitations.

## **Research Design**

Gross' (1984) review of the use of TA in anthropology outlines ten issues in TA research design which ethnographers must resolve in accordance with the question the study is trying to answer and the restrictions that time, resources and the ethnographic context impose upon it. These issues are sampling universe, sample units, observation interval, sample duration, sample frequency, codebook, coding rules, direct versus indirect observation, privacy, and ethics. The basic design of my study is described in Chapter Three, where I cover several of the issues Gross highlights. Here, I outline the decisions I took in relation to the issues not covered in Chapter Three. I provide reasoning for the decisions I made and consider the impact they may have had on my results.

## **Sampling Universe**

My sampling universe was not the boundaries of the human group, as Gross (1984, 537) recommends, but the boundaries of the geographical space within which I carried out my TA study. I needed explicit geographical boundaries for my TA study in order to be able to randomise the places I would visit to make my observations. Although other anthropologists working in difficult conditions have sacrificed randomisation in their sampling strategies in order to make their studies more feasible (Bernard, 2011) I decided that randomly sampling place was by far the best way of

getting a meaningful set of observations in the Walak context. If I had sampled households, I would have frequently found no one at home and would not have had the opportunity to observe the vast majority of Walak activities. If I had sampled individuals, I would have spent most of the day running around a large area trying to find an individual and record what they were doing. I could think of no way to accurately sample individuals at randomised times. I therefore decided to sample people by randomising places.

Although I was sampling geographical space, the focus of my research question was not on what activities happen in a given area, but rather on what activities the people who live in the area do. I wanted the TA study to cover an area in which it was as likely as possible that I would observe the people who were part of my census population. Consequently, I decided to include all six of the residential areas in which people who belong to Ikonium church sleep, and to exclude all the residential areas in which no Ikonium church members sleep.<sup>65</sup> Drawing a rough circle around these six residential areas allowed me to include a large patch of gardens that sits between two of these residential areas, which I wanted to do as many of the Ikonium church members have a garden there. It also included Ob Anggen school, but did not include the state school or the YPPGI school as they are well outside of that area.

It was tempting to make the area larger, in order to include other significant places, such as the YPPGI school and another large patch of gardens which various people from Ikonium use daily. However, in making each of these decisions I considered my biggest limiting factor - travel time. I had decided that my sampling time unit would be one hour, so I knew that I had to be able to make an observation at one point within the geographical sampling universe and then have enough time to travel to another randomly allocated point within it before the beginning of the next hour. I could have increased my time unit to two hours, in order to allow more travel time, but I would have so drastically reduced the number of observations I made that it would have made the study far less useful. As it was, getting enough observations felt overwhelmingly ambitious; my decision to prioritise randomisation meant that I could not cover a larger area.

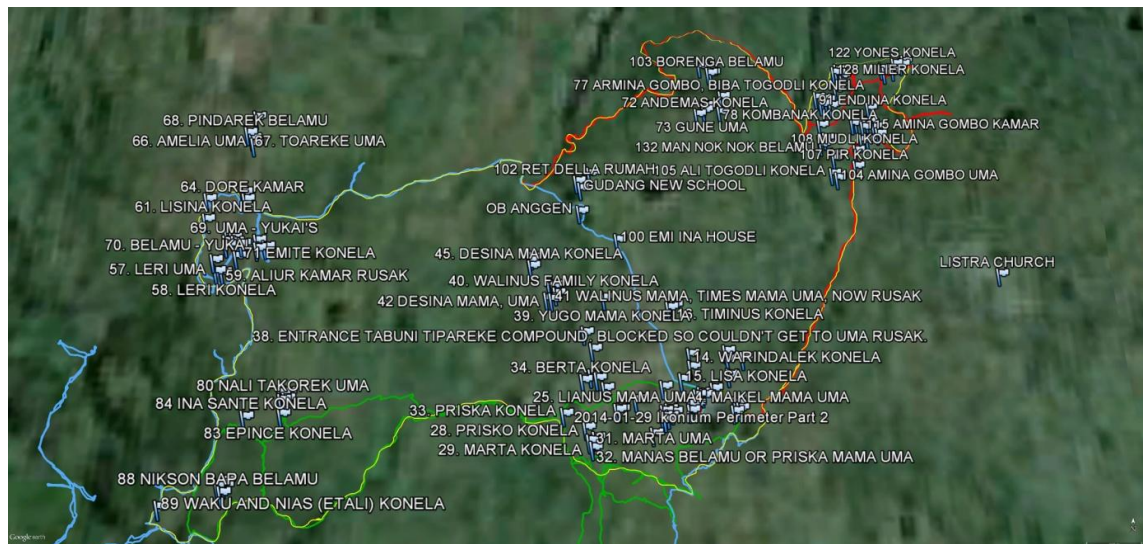
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<sup>65</sup> Even these categories are not clear cut, see Chapter Three.



Having roughly decided the area to cover, I set out to map the boundaries by walking around the outside of these six residential areas with my GPS device, making paths and rivers the outside boundary where possible, but cutting through grass and forest where necessary. In the end it took me three walks, and a total of eight hours and fifty-four minutes to successfully "draw" a perimeter around what I thought was a manageable area. I uploaded my GPS tracks from the three walks into Google Earth and used elements of each of them to draw the perimeter. I then overlaid the map with a series of numbered squares.

I did not adjust for altitude in my squares overlay. However, as the whole area covered was such a small area, and as people were so spread out within the squares, this introduced little, if any, error. Although some squares did not fall neatly within the perimeter I finally drew, this did not affect my observations. If those squares came up, I made observations in and around them as usual.



**Map showing the three GPS tracks of my perimeter walks, in blue, green and red, overlaid with a manually drawn perimeter outline in yellow.**

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015)



**Map showing the area of my TA study overlaid with numbered squares.**

Map data: Google Earth, used in accordance with Google Permissions (2015)

The area that I chose to cover does affect the activities seen over the course of the TA study. The fact that the TA study covered six residential areas and the non-residential areas between them (but not those around them or further afield) probably skewed the number of observations recorded towards activities done closer to the compounds, such as cooking and food preparation, personal hygiene and fetching water. It is also worth noting that although this area included forest, it was not being used much at the time for activities such as felling wood for construction, though other forested areas outside of the TA study area were. Had I been able to do a TA study that covered the whole of Eragayam Tengah I suspect I would have seen a higher proportion of gardening activities by women and of forest and construction activities by men.

### **Sampling Unit, Direct versus Indirect Observation and Privacy**

Although my sampling universe was geographically bounded, I chose individuals as my sampling unit and chose to record my data based only on firsthand observation. Choosing "household" as a sampling unit would have been both impracticable and inaccurate for answering my research questions as one member of a household rarely knows exactly what the other members of the household are doing at any given time, let alone who they are with. A high degree of autonomy is accorded to

even quite small children (see Chapter 6), so reported data would have been unreliable.

Although my questions were mainly about children's behaviour, I decided to record every individual I observed, on the basis that it is easy to exclude some observations during analysis when answering certain questions, but impossible to add them in if they become relevant. This turned out to be a good decision as I was able to gain valuable data about men and women's activities as well as about children's time use (see Chapter 8).

Observing individuals in situ firsthand is not an unusual, difficult or intrusive thing to do during daylight hours in Eragayam Tengah, though there were rare occasions when I came across a scenario that I interpreted as private. In such cases I forwent the potential observations for ethical reasons. Choosing individual as my sampling unit meant that I could rely on observed, rather than reported data for all but four observations, all of which were when I was told that adult men were sleeping in a visible men's house which had the door shut. I rate this reported data as highly reliable, with the most likely region for error being whether the men inside the men's house were actually asleep or not (this potential error is not relevant to my research questions as I do not distinguish between rest and sleep in my analyses in this thesis). A disadvantage of direct observation is that my TA study does not include activities which I could not observe, such as sexual intercourse, and it includes a disproportionately small number of discrete activities falling under the category "personal hygiene," but this is arguably unavoidable, regardless of methodology (Gross, 1984, 546). Sillitoe (2010a)'s time expenditure survey done with Wola highlanders in Papua New Guinea, which used the twenty-four hour recall method, reports similar omissions. These errors are not very relevant to the questions I am answering in this research, as time use is unlikely to differ for these activities as a result of enrolment in schooling.

### **Observation Units**

My time observation unit was one-hour intervals during daylight (from 5:30am to 6:30pm) hours, seven days a week. I decided to do daylight hours only, even though

people in Eragayam Tengah do engage in activities after dark, because I knew that my friends and close neighbours who felt responsible for my wellbeing would have been stressed by my walking around on my own after dark. I had already been told many times to go home quickly, before it got dark, often because of the dangers of spirits (*mongar*). I also knew that it would be perceived as inappropriate for me, as a married woman, to be walking around on my own after dark. The main activities I knew about that happened at night were get-togethers for singing or dancing that lead to pairing off for sex and I had already been reprimanded by one of the church leaders for attending one of these night-time dances without my husband. I myself did not feel safe walking around alone at night, particularly due to my lack of sure-footedness in the dark on rough paths with steep drop-offs. I also believed that including night-time hours would have a detrimental effect on my health, due to lack of sleep. As a result of this decision, social activities, supernatural activities and rest are likely underrepresented in my data. The results can thus only be interpreted as providing insight into Walak people's daylight activities.

My geographical observation unit was the map square allocated and all of the eight squares surrounding it, making an area of about 150 square metres. My observation unit needed to be at least this size, because, as my results show (see Chapters 3 and 7), Walak people spend a lot of time in ones and twos at distances that are well spread out from each other.

I had at first planned to spend forty minutes in each observation area, allowing twenty minutes of every hour for travel time between observation areas. I had also decided that if the eight squares surrounding the allocated map square were not visible, I would spend the majority of my time within that square, but ensure that I did at least one spot check on each of other eight squares within the hour. I discovered, however, that this allowed too much variation between my observation units. In particular types of terrain, doing spot checks on the surrounding eight squares cut into the observation time within the centre squares. Likewise, I realised that when the squares allocated for two consecutive observations were easily accessible or near each other, I did not have to allow so much time for travel and so was able to spend more time observing within them, meaning I could artificially get more observations for

those times and places. I further systematised my method to try and minimise the effect of these variables, implementing the changes on day six of observations. I decided to observe the central square for ten minutes, starting from when I arrived.<sup>66</sup> I recorded anyone who was there when I arrived, and anyone who passed or turned up during those ten minutes. I then did a snapshot check on the eight surrounding squares, recording only those who were there at that snapshot point. This gave me enough time to travel between observation squares even when they were quite far apart. I also decided I would only record any given individual once per hour, so if, within the ten minutes of observation, they changed their activity I only recorded them doing the first activity. I do not think that the adjustment to systematise the timings of the observations affected the number of observations recorded in the first five days of observations much, but I recognise that that these methodological adjustments could have been picked up in a pilot study, which is something I would do if I were repeating this TA study.

### **Observation Interval and Related Problems of Accuracy**

I used a spot check method for making my observations, arriving unannounced, taking an immediate mental snapshot of the scene and then recording as soon as possible exactly what was happening at the moment I arrived. One well known problem with the spot check method is that it is not always possible to avoid contaminating friends' observed actions with one's own presence, meaning that sometimes reconstruction of the activity by the observer, either by noting the surroundings and tools or by asking people what are doing, is necessary (Bernard, 2011, Gross, 1984). In practice, this proved to be less of a problem than I had anticipated, which I attribute largely to the fact that I undertook the TA study after sixteen months of participant observation in the same small geographical area. The people I was observing were used to me turning up unannounced, writing in notebooks and asking them what they were doing, and I was already good at understanding and reconstructing what people were doing from context.

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<sup>66</sup> All the observations were always within the one-hour interval, but due to travel variations, they were sometimes near the beginning and sometimes near the end of that time slot.

I did find it difficult when I came upon scenes of large groups of people, such as at a funeral, where it was nearly impossible to mentally record what everyone was doing when I arrived. In these cases, I did the best I could, sometimes resorting to 'higher order' activities such as "attending funeral" without the specificities such as "exchange activity" or "childcare" that I would have liked to have recorded. I was unable, at funerals, to record the activities of men in the men's house but I made estimates of how many men were in the men's house to the best of my ability and recorded them as doing "funeral activities." (I chose to err on the side of caution - in other words, if there is error, the error is that there were more men in attendance, not fewer).

There were specific social and ethical reasons that made recording data difficult at times. When I arrived at a funeral, for example, it was impossible to enter the compound without being seen, so I did not start writing until I had paid my respects. Similarly, every time I recorded observations of people indoors, I entered their house to talk to them for a while before moving on to my next square, and it concerned me that I may, meanwhile, have missed observations of people outdoors. In fact, had people passed outdoors I would probably have heard them or the people I was with may have called out to them, so I doubt this had as much impact as I feared it would at the time.

There were also occasions on which I was unable to record as much information about people as I would have liked to have done. If, for example, I saw a large group of children walking along a path together and I was not nearby, then I could not always accurately record each child's gender quickly enough before they passed. During analysis, I excluded any observations for which I did not have the relevant information accurately recorded.

### **Sample Duration, Sampling Frequency and Sampling Density**

My sample duration was ten weeks; observations were made on 26 days within that period. The density of observations was much higher at the beginning of the period: 76% of the observation hours were in the first four weeks of this period and only about 1% were in the last two weeks. This was because I had originally allocated

the three sets of observation hours to three fortnights, but had allowed for four weeks of built in flexibility. This meant that that if, say, I missed an observation on Thursday 7th February between 2:30pm and 3:30pm because I had got lost in the forest during a previous observation, I could carry out that observation between 2:30pm and 3:30pm on any Thursday in the following weeks. It also meant that when I had to travel to Sentani for visa reasons, I was able to shift the observations for those days into the weeks following them, that I was able to be flexible if something important came up which would interfere with my observations, and that I was able to schedule non-observation days for other methods and events. The daylight hours did shift very slightly over this time period from about thirteen hours a day to about twelve and a half hours a day, but I kept to the same hours, and even the earliest and the latest one-hour intervals were mostly daylight.

My sampling frequency of approximately thirty one-hour intervals per week was decided on the basis of balancing my capacity - as Gross (1984, 540) rightly says, "An investigator who relies on a randomizing procedure to schedule observations may begin to feel like a prisoner to the technique" - with the need to get a sufficient number of observations for the data to be meaningful. I knew I needed at least one day off this work per week and I thought that if I regularly worked more than ten hours a day on randomly scheduled observations the quality of the data would suffer due to fatigue. I therefore allocated sixty hours to each set and spread a set of seven days of observations over a fortnight.

## **Coding Rules**

I wrote a codebook of activity codes (see below) in advance of my study, planning to adapt it according to what I observed, which is what I did. For example, I did not have an appropriate code to describe children standing staring and doing nothing else, so when I observed this I created the code "idle." After returning from the field I then used my notes from the TA study to tabulate all the observations and ensure consistent coding across them. Sillitoe's (2010a) codes in *From Land to Mouth* as well as his feedback in supervision and the feedback from colleagues at conferences has helped me group the codes meaningfully, and in a way that is also comparable to other studies. I did nearly all of the observations myself so the consistency between

the observations is high. On one day I had a migraine and insufficient flexibility to rearrange my observation hours, so my husband and research assistant Aaron did my spot checks. Only 17 of the 1278 observations were recorded by him.

My original codebook was overly ambitious in terms of how much data I had hoped to record per observation. For example, I had intended to code for the type of interaction children were having with older children or adults (observing, imitating, participating, acting independently etc) as well as what they were doing, but I found that I could not record so much data about so many people quickly enough (I was doing all my observations by pen and paper). This "interaction" data also proved too imprecise to record meaningfully so eventually, I abandoned it. I learned that it is better to record less data and record it accurately and consistently than to try to record too much and risk lowering the quality of the whole dataset.

I recorded age according to broad categories conceived by me, but reflecting local understandings of children's ages in relation to schooling. "Too young" was used for children who were thought of as too young to go to school, "child" was used for children who could conceivably attend an SD school, "young adults" was used for children and teenagers who could conceivably attend an SMP or SMA school, and "adult" was used for people who would be thought of as too old to attend an SMA school. These categories are necessarily rough and were applied according to a subjective assessment I made, but as I recorded the names of the people I knew, I was able to go back and make finer-grained estimates of many of the children's ages with the help of Walak friends afterwards.

## **Sample Size**

Sample size was one of my biggest concerns; I did not know how many hours of observations I would need to do in order to produce a sufficiently large dataset. I aimed for 1500 observations and set up the study with 180 randomised hours of observation over three sets, on the basis that it was better to set up more hours than fewer, given the uncertainties I faced. After doing two sets of observations, I decided to reduce the third set by using only the first thirty hours allocated, making the total number of observation hours 150. I did this because the weeks spent doing TA



observations were not well understood by my Walak friends (see Chapter 3) and we had all missed the time spent sitting talking in each other's homes. I was nearing the end of my fieldwork and I felt it was more important to divert some of my time to investing in these relationships. In the end, I recorded 1278 useable observations of which 1226 were of indigenous people. I discuss the strengths and limits of this sample size in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 7, where I present my results.

There are some activities which I did not observe in the TA study even though I observed them fairly often in participant observation. These include braiding hair, making a fire, church services and making or playing small handmade guitars. These are activities which happen infrequently or for short periods of time, and so given the sample size, they were not observed due to chance (see Bernard and Killworth, 1993).

### **Multiple Activities**

I occasionally observed one person doing two or even three things at the same time. I dealt with this, as recommended by Bernard (2011) by recording all the activities in their order of primacy, according to my judgement at the time. I later coded these secondary observations into six categories to aid analysis. These were as follows.

Code A: the primary codes describe something the person was doing within the secondary code. For example, she was sleeping in the kitchen (primary) whilst at a funeral (secondary), or he was drinking coffee socially (primary) whilst officially in a business meeting (secondary). An analysis of the total amount of time spent in any one activity should include these secondary codes.

Code B. the person was doing both the primary and the secondary activity at the same time, but the secondary activity was passive. For example, she was cooking (primary, active) whilst doing childcare (secondary, passive - she was not paying any attention to the child). An analysis of the total amount of time spent in any one activity should include these secondary codes.

Code BB. the person was doing both the primary and the secondary activity at the same time, and both activities were active. For example, he was actively

supervising his daughter while clearing the compound. An analysis of the total amount of time spent in any one activity should include these secondary codes.

Code C. in these cases, the secondary code gives more information about the primary code. For example, she is doing a school activity (primary code) which, in this case, is cooking (secondary code) for the teachers. An analysis of the total amount of time spent in any one activity should not include these types of secondary codes.

Code D. the secondary codes describe something the person was doing within the primary code (in other words, the reverse of Code A). For example, she was at a funeral (primary) whilst cooking (secondary). The order of the codes matters. If a person is primarily at a funeral and cooking is what they are doing as they way they are participating, that is different than children playing outside the compound in which a funeral is being held. In the latter case, they are primarily playing, and they happen to be at a funeral. Unlike with the cooking example, being at a funeral is not really the determining factor in what they are doing. An analysis of the total amount of time spent in any one activity should include these secondary codes.

Code E. these are secondary codes that describe the same activity in a different way. For example, he was travelling to the market (primary) which was also travel to Wamena (secondary). This is rarely useful as, in fact, most things can be described in more than one way and usually it is better to choose one way for the sake of analysis. However, for an analysis on the total number of times a particular type of activity (such as travel to Wamena) was done it is useful to have these types of secondary codes, so that activities coded as something else do not get missed.

These six categories helped me to think clearly about my secondary codes and to use them appropriately in my analyses. I ran several analyses of secondary codes, but in the end the analyses I used for this thesis rely only on primary codes.

## **Weather and Terrain**

Inevitably, the conditions in which I carried out this TA study led to some potential inaccuracies. Physical access was a challenge, as certain squares were heavily forested or covered in very tall, thick grass. This sometimes led to me getting lost or entangled in long grass in the forest and having to repeat the observation hour on one

of the following weeks. Open spaces allowed for much freer observation than inaccessible forested spaces, so it is possible that I did not observe people in the forest even when they were there, though I did both call out and listen carefully to mitigate this.

Having to write a lot of information, very quickly, by hand, whilst on the go, sometimes in poor weather, and whilst also trying to engage in an appropriate social manner meant I could not always record everything as meticulously as I would have liked. For example, sometimes I wrote down "house" without specifying whether I was referring to the cooking house or a women's house. I also wanted to record data such as genealogical data that was not related to the TA study when I was given it. Sometimes rain faded some of the data I did record despite my attempts to keep my notebooks in zip lock bags. These aspects of the study were a challenge, but they do not undermine the validity of the results I have presented.

## Terrain Type Codes

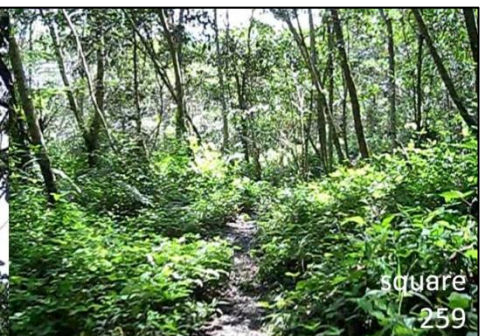






## secondary regrowth

Overgrown to more than thigh height, and in most cases over head height, but not with trees. Usually fairly wet. Extremely difficult to pass through.



## forest

Includes all forest, from clear paths to completely carpeted forest floor. The canopy coverage was usually quite light, but there is variety in this too.







photo by J. Hughes

Pictures are of multiple squares between Iringgok and Pidlima, below Gabedloma



photo by J. Hughes

## gardens

Includes gardens in use and unused gardens that have not reverted to any other kind of terrain.



photo by J. Hughes

## cleared

Land where trees have been recently cut down and nothing has yet been done to make a new garden. Often quite dead and dry, but in some cases beginning to be overgrown again.



square 29 or nearby



square 170





Pidlima – squares near 38-40



sq 40, Pidlima



Iringgok– squares 21, 33

## compound

Includes everything – indoor and outdoor - within compound fences.



sq 123,  
Wiyaghebagha



sq 12, Iringgok



sq 122,  
Wiyaghebagha



square  
87



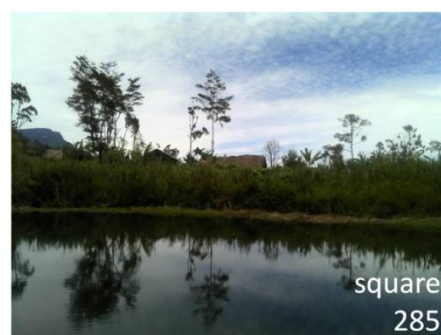
square  
149

## pond

Only used to code squares if the pond was the dominant feature of the square.



square  
264



square  
285

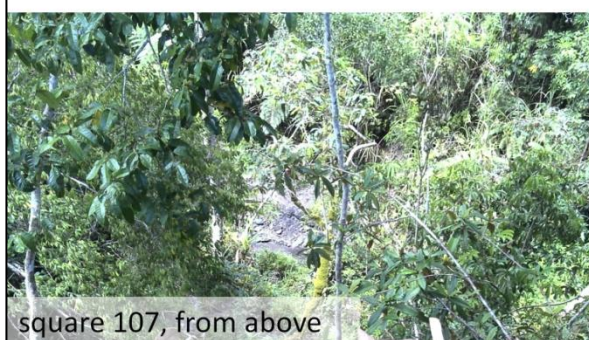




square 261

## river

Only used to code squares if the river was the dominant feature of the square.



square 107, from above



similar to  
square 119



square  
136



square 110

## school grounds

Includes Ob Anggen school, teachers' houses and the house shown in top left. Also includes large dirt yard.



squares 110, 84, 85, 135



square 109/110



## **scrubland/dirt/road**

Used for dry, clear areas, usually a thoroughfare. Sometimes slightly grassy but no more so than picture on bottom right.



## **muddy/swampy**

Only a handful of squares have this code. It is what I resorted to for areas that were open, but very wet. These areas were only used for pigs, or not used at all at the time of the study. They are mostly old garden land, and will probably eventually revert back to that. For example, one such square is where a friend had had a kitchen. After he moved his kitchen he used that land for pigs. I have not found pictures in my data of this type of terrain.



## **Conclusion**

My TA study gives an interesting insight into everyday behaviour in a small area. I have taken the time to include this appendix, detailing the decisions I made and the challenges I faced in undertaking this study for three reasons. Firstly, my ethical commitment to the Walak people of Eragayam Tengah motivates me to be as transparent as possible about how I gathered and interpreted data about their lives, not least as a reminder to the reader that the work between these pages is, inevitably, based on my interpretations. Secondly, my professional commitment to ethnography motivates me to detail my methods and their limitations carefully, as it is on this foundation that knowledge in the academic community is validated and built upon. Thirdly, I was both inspired and informed by reading about others' methodological choices. They influenced my own decisions and I hope that my explication here may one day serve to inspire and inform future researchers too.

## Appendix Five: Table Showing Spot Observations of SD YPPGI Mogonik

Day	Date	Time Slot	Number of Pupils Present	Number of Younger Siblings Present	Guru Honor Present	School Activity in progress	Notes
Mon	17th Feb	8am-9am	12	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Mon	17th Feb	9am-10am	36	4	both	yes	Teachers present, one <i>guru honor</i> taught PKN (citizenship) to nine grade five and grade six students while the other <i>guru honor</i> taught IPA (science) to fifteen grade two and grade three students and two of their younger siblings. A further twelve grade one students studied Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) on their own in a third classroom with two more younger siblings sitting in.
Wed	19th Feb	8am-9am	9	1	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Wed	19th Feb	11am-noon	24	2	both	yes	Teachers present, six grade one students again studied alone, while one <i>guru honor</i> taught mathematics to twelve grade three and four students and two of their younger siblings and the other <i>guru honor</i> supervised six grade six students.
Thurs	20th Feb	8am-9am	7	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.

Day	Date	Time Slot	Number of Pupils Present	Number of Younger Siblings Present	Guru Honor Present	School Activity in progress	Notes
Fri	21st Feb	8am-9am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Fri	21st Feb	10am-11am	27	1	one	yes	Teacher present, twenty seven students in "outdoor activities."
Fri	21st Feb	11am-noon	27	1	one	yes	Teacher present, twenty seven students in "outdoor activities."
Sat	22nd Feb	11am-noon	2	0	no	no	No school, children hanging around after class.
Mon	24th Feb	8am-9am	7	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Tues	25th Feb	9am-10am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Sat	1st Mar	10am-11am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Mon	3rd Mar	8am-9am	2	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Mon	3rd Mar	11am-noon	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Tues	4th Mar	9am-10am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Tues	4th Mar	10am-11am	5	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Thurs	13th Mar	11am-noon	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Fri	14th Mar	10am-11am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Fri	14th Mar	11am-noon	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Wed	26th Mar	9am-10am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Thurs	27th Mar	8am-9am	13	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.

Day	Date	Time Slot	Number of Pupils Present	Number of Younger Siblings Present	Guru Honor Present	School Activity in progress	Notes
Thurs	27th Mar	9am-10am	12	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Fri	28th Mar	9am-10am	7	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Fri	28th Mar	10am-11am	7	0	no	no	Schoolchildren waiting to see whether or not the <i>guru honor</i> will arrive.
Mon	31st Mar	8am-9am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Mon	31st Mar	11am-noon	11	0	both	yes	Teachers present, one <i>guru honor</i> supervised two grade six students studying, while the other taught IPS (social sciences) to nine students in another classroom.
Tues	1st April	9am-10am	23	1	one	yes	Teacher present, five grade five and six students studied alone in one classroom with one of their younger siblings, and three grade three and four students studied alone in another classroom, while the <i>guru honor</i> taught the fifteen grade one and two students who had turned up that day.
Thurs	3rd April	9am-10am	23	2	no	yes	Children in class, no teacher present.
Fri	4th April	8am-9am	0	0	no	no	Neither schoolchildren nor teacher present.
Fri	4th April	9am-10am	2	0	no	no	No school, children hanging around.

## Appendix Six: Excerpts from a Conversation with Genk Yikwa

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I have included these excerpts from an informal conversation, although it was one of many, because I quote the conversation in several places throughout the thesis, and I wanted to give the reader an opportunity to read the quotes in a bit more context.

This informal conversation happened on the 31st January 2014 between myself and Genk Yikwa in his kitchen with his two daughters present. It was morning and I was there because I was planning to shadow one of his daughters, Ebel Yikwa (see Chapters Three and Six). We had a long conversation interspersed with feeding the pigs and keeping Eben, Genk's young daughter, out of trouble. The conversation took place in a local dialect of Indonesian, interspersed with Walak. With Genk's permission, I recorded parts of the conversation, and I have translated and transcribed excerpts of the conversation from these recordings. I have tried to translate our conversation as closely as possible to the original and still retain the meaning. Following normal Walak convention, I call Genk "Gomenak" in these excerpts. An English-speaking reader may find the repetitive and slightly provocative conversational style unusual; it was not unusual in Eragayam Tengah among those who conversed in the local Indonesian and as the reader will note, Gomenak had no hesitation in contradicting me if he disagreed with one of my assertions or interpretations, even if I expressed it in a leading or provocative way.

Gomenak had completed SD, SMP and SMA schooling; his wife, he told me, was unschooled. They have five living children (see Chapter Six for genealogical diagram). The eldest is unschooled and now apparently works in Jayapura, the next is enrolled in the SMP, the third - Ebel - is enrolled in the state SD, the fourth is enrolled in the SD YPPGI Magonik and the fifth - Eben - is still too young for school. Thus, Gomenak had a child enrolled in each one of the schools in the area except Ob Anggen. The first excerpt started while Gomenak was helping me update my data about his immediate family members. A horizontal line represents a time lapse between excerpts.

*Rachel:* Where did you go to school?

*Gomenak:* I've finished. I've taken the test to become a [government] employee three times but I didn't...we don't have any family on the inside [in the civil service] so I wasn't taken on [*angkat*, literally: "raised" or "lifted up"].

*Rachel:* Oh, you don't have any family on the inside?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah.

*Rachel:* Oh, right!

*Gomenak:* But now, just now, Oreb's wife, you know? We took the test at the same time, but we still haven't heard the results.

*Rachel:* So this was your fourth time?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah.

*Rachel:* But when you were a child did you go to SD school? When you were small, here, was there an SD here?

*Gomenak:* There was one.

*Rachel:* SD Bilem [meaning, SD YPPGI Magonik, which was called SD Bilem colloquially]

*Gomenak:* Yes

*Rachel:* And did you go to it or not?

*Gomenak:* I went.

*Rachel:* Until what class?

*Gomenak:* SD, SMP, SMA

*Rachel:* All of it?

*Gomenak:* All of it.

*Rachel:* Oh, right. So, SD at Bilem and then...you finished SMA. But no university right?

*Gomenak:* Right.

*Rachel:* But now you have a role/job don't you?

*Gomenak:* Not yet.

*Rachel:* Not yet?

*Gomenak:* I haven't yet been taken on as an employee.

*Rachel:* But in this area, do you have a role?

*Gomenak:* No

*Rachel:* No, OK..."in process," I'll write "in process..."

*Gomenak:* Right

*Rachel:* And [your son] Reuben, is that the one who is called Duwaeb?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, Duwaeb. Duwaeb, but on his diploma it's Reuben.

*Rachel:* But Duwaeb is the name that you gave him?

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* [exclaims]

*Gomenak:* [laughs]

*Rachel:* They really change things...!

*Gomenak:* [no longer laughing] But the teachers are wrong...

*Rachel:* Yes...

*Gomenak:* [in a serious tone] These SD teachers are wrong.

*Rachel:* It's true. Why, eh? Why did they change it?

*Gomenak:* I don't know. His name when he was born was Duwaeb but on his diploma - it's the teachers who are wrong.

*Rachel:* So it's written Reuben.

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm.

*Rachel:* And did they write Gombo, or Togodli or Yikwa or...?

*Gomenak and his daughter in unison:* Yikwa

*Rachel:* So that's exactly right.

*Gomenak:* [Confirming] M'mm.

*Rachel:* Because there are those whose *aluak* is recorded wrong as well...

At this point Gomenak was distracted by the pigs and started instructing his daughter to feed them.

---

Later, after Gomenak had told me the educational attainment and positions of each of his immediate family members, we carried on talking about the civil service test:

*Rachel:* Do you have any family members who are employees at the moment? So that if you take the test [to become a civil servant] you could be taken on, or not yet?

*Gomenak:* Here's the thing, because...those of us who do the test, if we have family who are employees then we can be taken on. But now...three times I've tested...twice I tested and wasn't received but now Oreb's family, his wife, did the test with me.

*Rachel:* So maybe you'll be able to via...[interrupted to stop Eben from doing something]

*Gomenak:* I haven't heard the results.

---

*Rachel:* And...here, I'm recording again so that...and at the bottom for school, you have to, you don't have to pay right?

*Gomenak:* No

*Rachel:* But you have to give pigs or chickens or firewood or...?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, for school fees, you pay each year, you pay the first year, you also pay the second year, you also pay the third year. That's for the SMP.

*Rachel:* SMP?

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* You pay what?

*Gomenak:* You pay money.

*Rachel:* How much each year?

*Gomenak:* It's like this...[inaudible, he is possibly counting] - I don't know. Those of us back then...now there's lots of money. Those of us who went to school then didn't have money. Say...Rp. 10, 000 was big money. Rp. 5,000 was big money.

*Rachel:* Yes, it's true. I also remember it being like that. When I was small it was like that too.

[brief interlude to discuss the changes in currency]

*Rachel:* So Duwaeb, to go to SMP, does he have to pay or...?

*Gomenak:* Pay!

*Rachel:* And does he get money from yourself or from whom?

*Gomenak:* Me

*Rachel:* Oh. But you don't know how much?

*Gomenak:* The money?

*Rachel:* Yeh

*Gomenak:* It's Rp. 300,000 a year.

*Rachel:* Oh Rp. 300,000. The same as Ob Anggen. Oh, Ob Anggen is Rp. 600,000.

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah



*Rachel:* But for exams, does he pay for them too or not?

*Gomenak:* Yes, you pay for that too. That's one pig, one chicken and money...Rp. 200,000 or Rp. 100,000 and something...approximately...I'm not sure exactly.

*Rachel:* OK

*Gomenak:* But that's for exams - then pigs are cooked.

*Rachel:* Everyone cooks and eats together?

*Gomenak:* No, just the teachers.

*Rachel:* Just the teachers?

*Gomenak:* Yeh.

*Rachel:* But then they must be so many pigs and just a few teachers.

*Gomenak:* [laughing] But some are killed and cooked and some are kept.

*Rachel:* They're put in a pig sty?

*Gomenak:* Yes

*Rachel:* Whose pig sty?

*Gomenak:* The teachers'

*Rachel:* Doesn't that anger the parents?

*Gomenak:* No, it's the parents who "help." [*bantu* - the Indonesian word *bantu* can also be translated "contribute," as in "Will you help with my school fees?" or "They helped with the bride price." The expectation associated with it is that this contribution will be reciprocated: those who help will be helped.]

*Rachel:* Oh...why...

*Gomenak:* It's the children, school is important

*Rachel:* Oh...OK! That's how it is, eh? And do they keep those pigs or do they pass them on to other people, such as the teachers in Wamena or...?

*Gomenak:* They eat them. Well, eat or sell or...that kind of thing.

*Rachel:* The same with chickens?

*Gomenak:* Yes, the same.

*Rachel:* And do they ever "help" the parents? Do they reciprocate, or not? The teachers.

*Gomenak:* The teachers? Do they pay us?

*Rachel:* Yes

*Gomenak:* No, no. It's given for the schoolchildren. They're born and grow there, don't they?

*Rachel:* Yes...and do they ever share the meat with parents?

*Gomenak:* The ones which...

*Rachel:* The pigs which were given to the teachers, do they ever share the pork from them with the parents?

*Gomenak:* No, no

*Rachel:* No. With the schoolchildren?

*Gomenak:* No. Those are specifically for the teachers. If you're talking about parents and schoolchildren eating together, that's like the other day when we cooked at the bottom that time. If it's a party like that then we do [all eat together].

*Ebel:* At Winadloma

*Rachel:* At Winadloma. That Christmas celebration right?

*Gomenak and Ebel:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* And the teachers, do they get a salary from the government too?

*Gomenak:* Yes

*Rachel:* So a salary and pigs, eh?

*Gomenak:* [laughing]

*Rachel:* Oh, that's good.

*Gomenak:* [laughing]

*Rachel:* That's good for them, isn't it?

*Gomenak:* [laughing] Yeh, that's...you finish class 1, class 2, you finish class 3 and you're going to move up to SMA right?

*Rachel:* [confirming] M'mm

*Gomenak:* That's when you give a pig.

*Rachel:* [confirming] M'mm. That's when you give a pig to the teachers.

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* But at the end of class 1 and class 2 you don't?

*Gomenak:* Not then, no.

*Rachel:* Just the last one?

*Gomenak:* Just the last one.

*Rachel:* And if you don't give a pig, will the student get their diploma or not?

*Gomenak:* No

*Rachel:* Really?

*Gomenak:* You pay then you can get it.

*Rachel:* Then you get a diploma.

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah

*Rachel:* That's their rules?

*Gomenak:* Yes, that's the rules

*Rachel:* Oh right. Is that good or wrong?

*Gomenak:* Ah, it's like this. It's not really comfortable for the community, for the parents.

*Rachel:* Yes

*Gomenak:* They don't do it like that in town.

*Rachel:* [laughing] Right!

*Gomenak:* But in the village it's hard.

*Rachel:* But what about if, like, here's an example, if Tanius took his exams but he didn't get good results, but if you paid a pig, could he get his diploma?

*Gomenak:* Yes

*Rachel:* Yes, whether you get good results or not, it doesn't matter?

*Gomenak:* Well if the student doesn't get good results the parents will be angry at the teacher.

*Rachel:* Ohhh...yeh...

*Gomenak:* [They'll say] "Why? We sacrificed with a pig, a chicken, money, so why didn't the student pass?" They'll be angry with the teacher.

*Rachel:* Oh....it's like that. The point is, if you've paid they have to pass.

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* Oh, it's like that.

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* So they will record grades in accordance with the payments?

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* So do they really take the exams [*ujian*] or not?

*Gomenak:* At the moment?

*Rachel:* Yes

*Gomenak:* Not yet, not yet.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* They've done their tests [*ulangan*].

*Rachel:* Tests?

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* That's [inaudible]?

*Gomenak:* No, tests. They take their tests, the teachers fill in their reports, and if they get marks of six or higher then they can go up into the next class.

*Rachel:* Oh yes, that's right.

*Gomenak:* Five can be OK too, if you get five in mathematics then that's OK but if you get four or lower, then you don't go up to the next class.

*Rachel:* Even if you pay, you don't go up?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* Can you, if a student has low marks but pays a pig, can they go up to the next class?

*Gomenak:* No. Moving up a class is not yet the time to pay a pig. When you finish class 3, that's when...

*Rachel:* That's when you pay.

*Gomenak:* That's when you pay.

*Rachel:* And the new teachers, from...where are they from, eh? Those ones...the ones...

*Gomenak:* Yes, from...the ones from...

*Rachel:* Manado is it?

*Gomenak:* Uh...yes, Manado.

*Rachel:* Yes, do they follow this system? Do they also get pigs?

*Gomenak:* But - it's the head teacher!

*Rachel:* Oh, the head teacher?

*Gomenak:* Yes. If the head teacher says to do it, we do it.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* All those teachers, those Javanese teachers, they're not like that.

*Rachel:* They don't get pigs?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, only money.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* If they're indigenous teachers, we do it that way.

*Rachel:* The Javanese teachers don't do it?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, those teachers, they don't have that way.

*Rachel:* Just salaries?

*Gomenak:* Yes, just salaries.

*Rachel:* They don't get pigs, chickens...

*Gomenak:* Yes, well...chickens and money.

*Rachel:* Oh. Chickens and money but no pigs?

*Gomenak:* Yes.

*Rachel:* Why?

*Gomenak:* That's because...Javanese people are good.

*Rachel:* Oh. Good? They're good?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah. Their thinking is like this: "Oh, we've also got a salary, [if we do this] then it will make these community people's lives hard, we can't do that..." Like that.

*Rachel:* M'mm, like that. But indigenous teachers aren't like that?

*Gomenak:* Oh indigenous teachers! [tuts and exclaims] It's difficult!

*Rachel:* But, why, because, they're indigenous, in the end...how about the parents can say to them, "Don't do it like that!" and...

*Gomenak:* [interrupting] Ah, but everyone says that and demonstrates. We did a demonstration down at Winadloma but the teachers are people who can't be influenced [literally: people who can't hear].

*Rachel:* They want to follow that system.

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah.

*Rachel:* It's not just here, in Bokondini it's the same...

*Gomenak:* Everywhere! Everywhere is the same.

*Rachel:* Everywhere is the same.

*Gomenak:* The same [laughs lightly] - only town doesn't have this system.

*Rachel:* Oh yes, in town it's just salaries, you don't have to pay pigs?

*Gomenak:* Yes

*Rachel:* And that's SMP, what about SD?

*Gomenak:* SD also, at the end, next month it's exams right? Next month it's exams, so what I have prepared in Ebel's name is one pig, one chicken and Rp. 50,000 in money [Ebel was in class 6 and was therefore due to finish SD]

*Rachel:* Rp. 50,000

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* And if not, she wouldn't pass?

*Gomenak:* [laughing] Yes, she wouldn't pass!

*Rachel:* [laughing] But if you pay, she'll pass?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah.

*Gomenak:* She'd pass, but if you don't have all three - pig, chicken and money - then when she goes to get her diploma, well, when all three are paid, then you get your diploma.

*Rachel:* Oh, so you pass but you can't get your diploma?

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* And do you pay to the head teacher or to the teachers?

*Gomenak:* The head teacher

*Rachel:* Yes? And is he indigenous?

*Gomenak:* Yes, he's indigenous

*Rachel:* But, so do the parents give him permission to do it that way?

*Gomenak:* [makes disapproving noise]

*Rachel:* There's no permission?

*Gomenak:* Right

*Rachel:* M'mm. He's going to be very rich.

*Gomenak:* M'mm. [In a disapproving tone] Because he gets a salary and big pigs.

*Rachel:* That's the system here is it?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* And the [head teacher] at the SD, has he ever shared it out or not? Or does he just eat it with his family?

*Gomenak:* [He eats it with] his family.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* The teachers, when they have exams, they kill and eat them there.

*Rachel:* In an earth oven?

*Gomenak:* No, in saucepans.

*Rachel:* For a party?

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* And people come, like the Head of the [Education] Department comes?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, that's it.

*Rachel:* Parents too?

*Gomenak:* No, schoolchildren

*Rachel:* Schoolchildren?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* And guests?

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* And they eat pork?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] A'ah

*Rachel:* They eat pork from the pigs which the parents have contributed?

*Gomenak:* Yeh.

*Rachel:* And then...

*Gomenak:* Actually for that, it's not the schoolchildren. Only invitees.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* Guests and the teachers...

*Rachel:* Oh, I see. Do they cook some pigs and keep some alive, or do they cook them all?

*Gomenak:* No, they keep some alive.

*Rachel:* Oh

*Gomenak:* It lasts three days. On the first day, they cook pig, on the second day too, and on the third day too.

*Rachel:* They cook pigs every day for three days?

*Gomenak:* [confirming] M'mm

*Rachel:* Oh, so they need a lot of pigs

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* And has the Governor ever attended that, or...?

*Gomenak:* Sorry?

*Rachel:* The Governor, or the Regent?

*Gomenak:* No, no

*Rachel:* Just the Head of the [Education] Department?

*Gomenak:* Just him.

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*Gomenak:* If you go to the state schools and don't know your letters, you can marry, but here's the thing at this English language school [referring to SD Ob Anggen] if boys, I mean girls, know their letters, then finish school, then they can marry.

*Rachel:* Really?

*Gomenak:* So people say...

*Rachel:* I don't know!

*Gomenak:* [laughing]

*Rachel:* I haven't heard that yet.

*Gomenak:* Yeh

*Rachel:* Oh, you mean, that boys look for people who know their letters?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, they look for girls who know their letters.

*Rachel:* Oh. I don't know.

*Gomenak:* If the boy's gone to school and the girl hasn't, it isn't comfortable.

*Rachel:* Oh, so they look for someone the same?

*Gomenak:* Yeh, the same, the same is good

*Rachel:* Oh.

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[Talking about one of my unmarried female Walak friends.]

*Gomenak:* Tuwmol, you mean the local one?

*Rachel:* Yes

*Gomenak:* Ah, she didn't go to school! She doesn't know her letters.

*Rachel:* M'mm

*Gomenak:* She'll be stupid.

*Rachel:* Ah! She's not stupid! She's really clever! Sure, she doesn't know her letters, but when I talk to her, she grasps what I'm saying straight away.

*Gomenak:* Yes, indeed. That's true, but if you don't know your letters you also can't read and things like that.



*Rachel:* M'mm, that's true. That's because of not going to school.

*Gomenak:* Yeh

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*Gomenak:* God created all people intelligent, but it's we who make ourselves stupid, isn't it?

*Rachel:* Maybe...well, there are some people who are born with less...less...

*Gomenak:* ...who read less...

*Rachel:* Not really, but...well, I suppose it's like you said, if you're diligent you can learn.

*Gomenak:* Yes, if you're diligent you can know your letters.

*Rachel:* Yes, or cultural knowledge.

*Gomenak:* [distractedly] Yes

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*Rachel:* What do you think are the possessions that people see as most important here?

*Gomenak:* Pigs

*Rachel:* Pigs are first...

*Gomenak:* People are first. People are important. Listen - I married Karobage. That's the most important. Then, pigs, pigs are important. Chickens too. The things which are added to that are things like pots and woks, then aluminium, solar panels for electricity, those kinds of things are important. ...Things like mobile phones, it depends on the opinion of different people, they can be important too. ...Things like a camera, that's just an addition. ...The really important thing is to get married to a man, or to a woman if you're a man - and to have pigs. If you don't have pigs, you just can't.

*Rachel:* You can't live.

*Gomenak:* Right.

*Rachel:* Why's that?

*Gomenak:* No. If we have pigs, that's when we have enthusiasm. Not having pigs is like being a small child.

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